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railroad district plan



city of san luis obispo

historic southern pacific freight warehouse, circa 1895



Roundhouse workers circa 1905

city of san luis obispo
RAILROAD DISTRICT plan

adopted june 16, 1998

community development department
990 palm street
san luis obispo, ca 93401-3249



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Khrushchev's visit, san luis obispo railroad depot, september 20, 1959

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city of san luis obispo
RAILROAD DISTRICT plan
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section title pages: historic photo of a pacific coast railway locomotive
and passenger cars with the southern pacific roundhouse in the background

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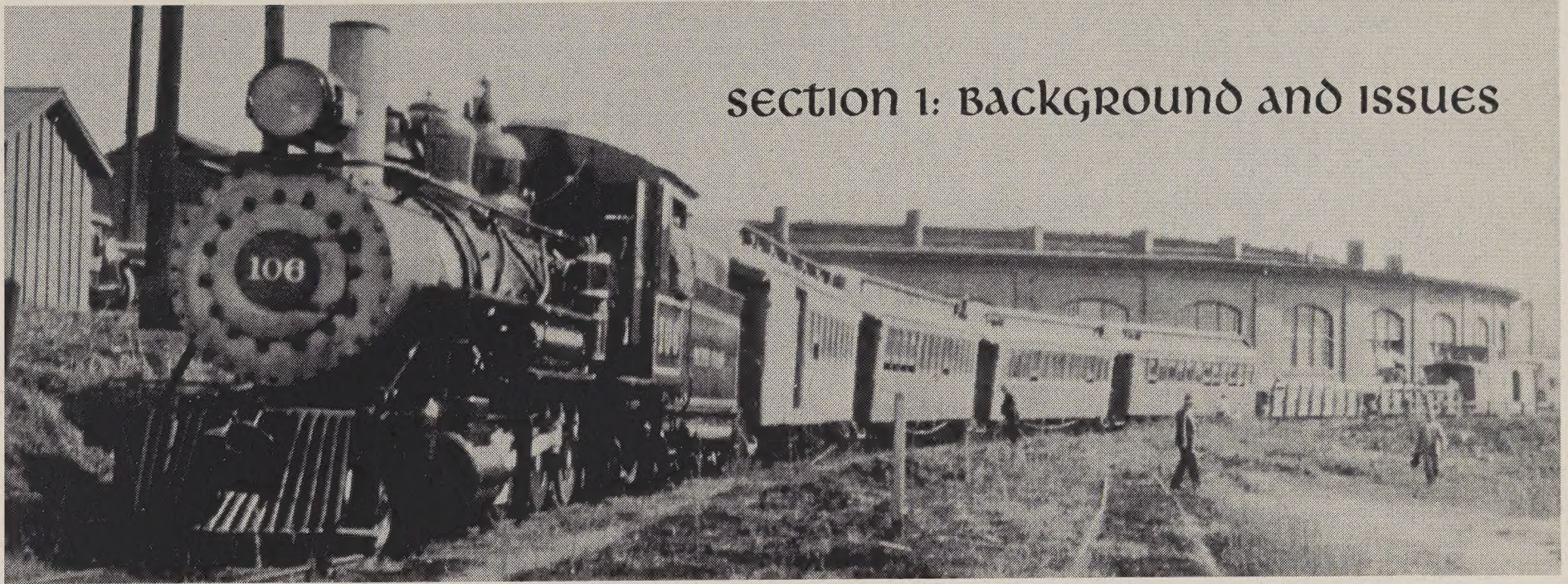
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section 1: Background and issues

Introduction

The Railroad District Plan grew out of citizens' suggestions that a plan be prepared to address several important issues, including traffic circulation, open space and historic preservation, safe pedestrian and bicycle connections, aesthetics, public safety, and the need for additional automobile parking. The City Council directed staff to prepare a plan which would address these issues and ensure that the various public improvements planned or underway in the District would be properly coordinated.

The Railroad District influences San Luis Obispo's economy, transportation, and urban character. Recognizing the importance of the District, the General Plan identifies the Santa Barbara Street corridor – the main transportation “artery” which links the District with Downtown and State Highway 101 — as a “special design area” and calls for a plan to guide renovation and improvement of buildings, streetscape, landscaping and public use areas. This plan is intended to guide development in the District and to implement General Plan policy for that portion of the special design area encompassed by the District.

Purpose

The purposes of the Railroad District Plan are to:

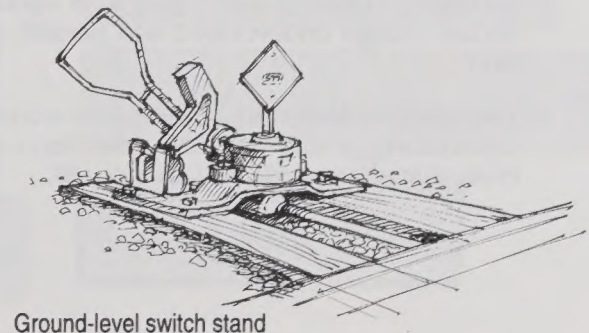
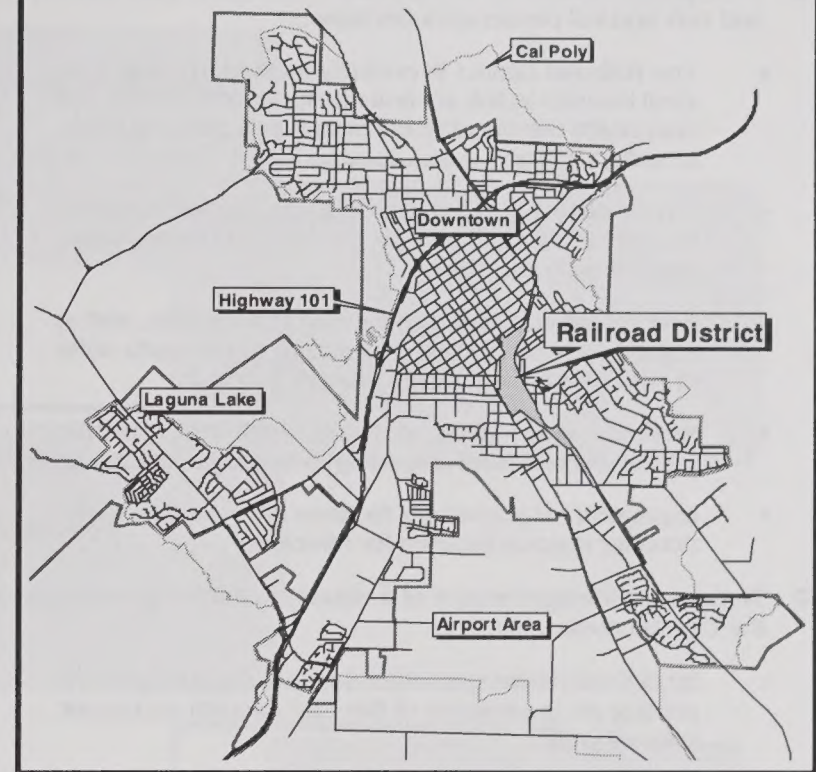
1. Implement the City's General Plan with a detailed focus on the Railroad District;
2. Develop a community consensus on an overall vision for the railroad area;
3. Coordinate public and private investment in the area to realize the vision
4. Preserve the District's historic character with architectural standards which guide new development.

The plan allows the community to consider circulation, land use, historic preservation, recreation, public safety and aesthetics in a comprehensive way. It encourages logical, safe and attractive development, consistent with General Plan policies in this small but visually sensitive and historic corridor.

Relationship to Other City Plans

The Railroad District Plan is an “area plan” adopted by the City to implement the General Plan. The Railroad District Plan builds upon that foundation to provide more specific guidance for decision makers, property owners, business people and others involved in community development, commerce and transportation. It is the result of focused community discussions and decisions on the Railroad District and how to best implement General Plan policies. As such, the Plan represents the community's guidance to elected and appointed decision makers, property owners, developers and the public at large. The Plan supplements other adopted City plans, such as the Bicycle Transportation Plan, Architectural Review in San Luis Obispo, and the Historic Preservation Program Guidelines.

Figure 1: Project Area Vicinity Map



Ground-level switch stand

introduction

Community Objectives

Following are the community's objectives expressed by this plan and reasons why they are important:

- To improve circulation for bicyclists, motorists, pedestrians, and bus and rail passengers because...
 - The Railroad District is centrally located, making it an ideal location to link several transportation modes and encourage use of public transit and less polluting forms of transportation;
 - As one of the City's main north-south circulation routes, the railroad right-of-way is frequently used by bicyclists, joggers and pedestrians;
 - Bike routes and trails have evolved over time, and in some locations need improvement to be made safer or need to be more inconveniently located;
 - Streets, sidewalks, parking and other public improvements need upgrading to meet standards; and
 - Expanded rail passenger facilities have increased the need for support facilities for travelers.
- To enhance the appearance of a visually sensitive gateway to the City because...
 - 20,000 rail passengers enter San Luis Obispo annually, gaining an impression of the City through its historic railroad yard;
 - The railroad right-of-way is one of the City's largest contiguous open space areas, with about one-half square mile of undeveloped and partially developed land;
 - The railroad corridor directs views toward some of the City's most scenic landmarks: Cerro San Luis, Bishop Peak, Santa Lucia Hills and Terrace Hill;

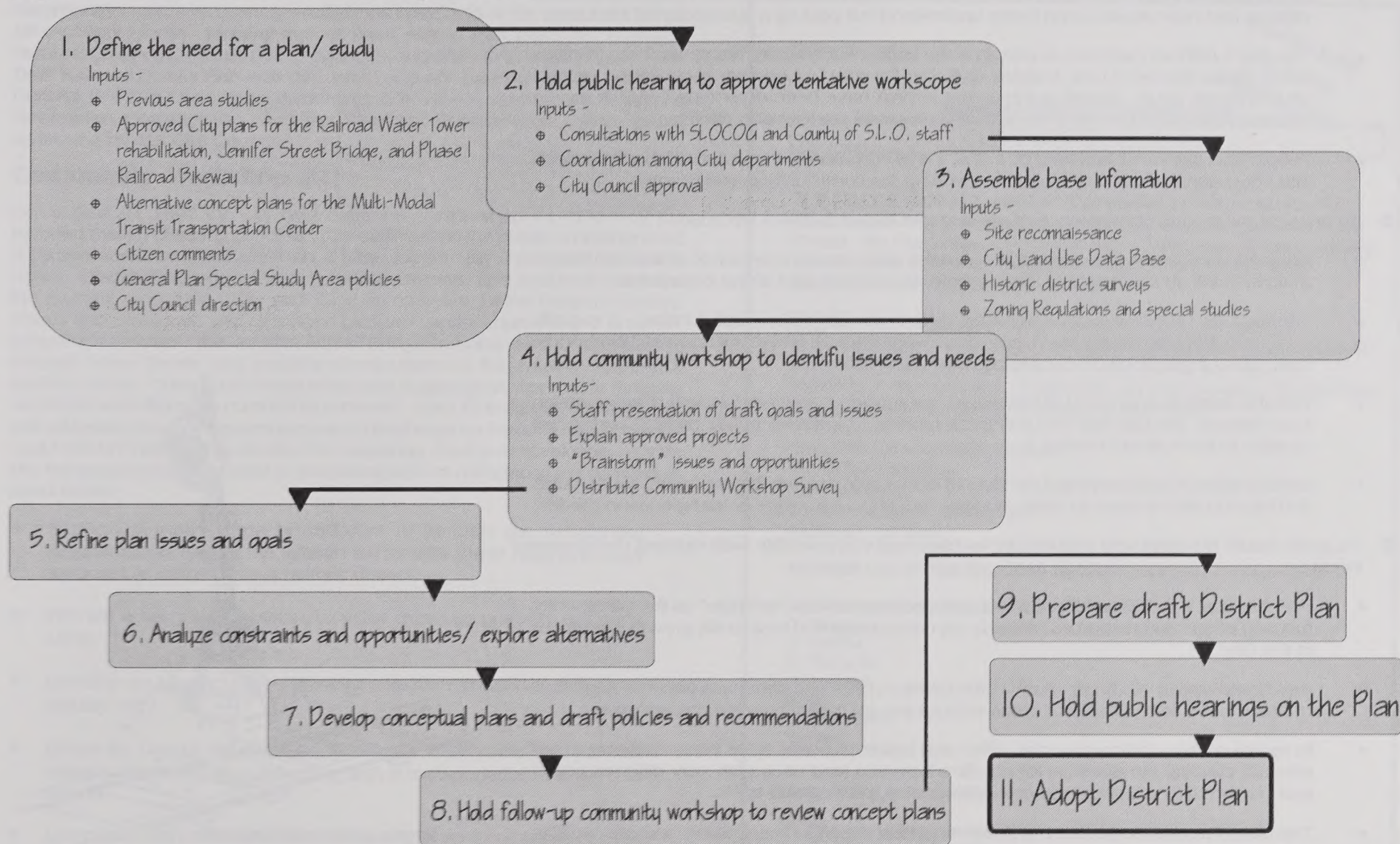


An aerial photograph, taken in 1997, showing Railroad Square, the depot, the parking lots and a portion of the tracks.



Views of Cerro San Luis and Bishop Peak from the railroad corridor.

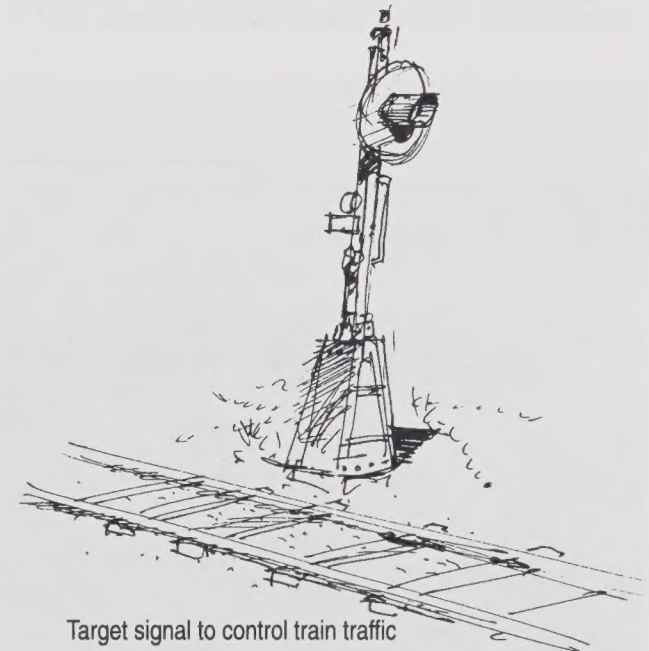
Figure 2: Diagram of the Planning Process



introduction

Community Objectives continued:

- ☞ To preserve and interpret historic railroad structures, site features and their settings because...
 - San Luis Obispo grew up around the railroad. By preserving railroad historic resources, citizens and policymakers can better understand our past as a guidepost for the future;
 - The City's railroad yard was at one time the largest such facility along Southern Pacific's Coast Route between Los Angeles and San Francisco; however most of the original structures are gone. Some of those that remain have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, meriting special preservation efforts;
 - People of all ages are fascinated by trains. Other communities have turned this fascination into educational and tourist facilities, enriching the community in many ways.
- ☞ To improve safety and convenience of parking and transit facilities because...
 - Amtrak's San Diegan passenger train provides daily service between SLO and San Diego, making trains an alternative to intermediate-distance car and airline commutes;
 - The Railroad District is located approximately in the City's geographic center. It is easily accessible from Downtown and from nearby commercial and residential neighborhoods, making it a logical location for a transit center;
 - With the assistance of the SLO Council of Governments and the California Transportation Commission, the City has secured grant funding to improve public parking and transit facilities in the Railroad District;
 - Santa Barbara/Osos Street and the railroad right-of-way are heavily used north-south routes and need improvements to safely accommodate a wide range of transportation modes;
- ☞ To guide future development and ensure architectural compatibility with existing development because...
 - For decades, the Railroad District had remained somewhat "invisible" as the community focused efforts and resources primarily on commercial and residential growth elsewhere in the City;
 - As railroad activity declined, many of the District's uses and structures became neglected or abandoned, leaving sizable areas without regular maintenance or improvement;
 - In recent years, retail-commercial, office and residential uses have expanded next to the railroad, creating the potential for conflicts between land uses with very different needs and characteristics, in terms of aesthetics, noise, parking and traffic.
 - The District's continued economic health depends, in part, on minimizing land use conflicts so that mixed uses can coexist and reinvestment in the area can continue.



Target signal to control train traffic

community workshops and survey

Community Workshops and Survey

Community comments at the beginning of the planning process helped define the Plan's overall goals and issues before the Plan was drafted. To solicit community input, two evening workshops were held at the San Luis Obispo City/County Library. Meeting notices were sent to area residents, business owners, property owners, public agencies and other interested parties. The Draft Railroad District Plan was discussed at public hearings before the City's Cultural Heritage Committee, Architectural Review Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Planning Commission before being approved by the City Council.

Community Workshop #1:

On August 20, 1997 the City held community workshop #1 to kick-off the Railroad District planning process. City staff hosted the public workshop and recorded audience comments on a large format "flip chart" and in written notes. District property owners, business owners, and residents attended the evening workshop. City staff gave an overview of the District's history, issues and problems, and described planned capital improvement projects, including bikeways, the Jennifer Street Bridge, rehabilitation of the historic Railroad Water Tower, and possible development of the multi-modal transit transfer center. Community comments and suggestions were wide ranging, as can be seen from the comments received. Also, Community Surveys and self-addressed stamped envelopes were distributed so that interested persons could send in their comments after the workshop. Staff gained valuable insights into the issues most important to the participants as reflected in the comments listed below.

- Expand planning area boundaries to include the residential neighborhood east of the railroad tracks (Ella Street neighborhood) for possible inclusion as a historic district.
- Provide a second pedestrian/bicyclist crossing, possibly at Penny Lane.
- Develop an historic railroad district attraction (museum, spur line, display, etc.)
- Reuse the historic Southern Pacific Freight Warehouse for a railroad artifacts display, or in connection with a transportation link to Avila Beach.
- Use railroad right-of-way behind the "Do-it" Center for a historic display of railroad cars or locomotives; possible link to bikeway.

Figure 3: Sample Community Survey

August 20, 1997

RECEIVED
AUG 22 1997
CITY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

railroad district master plan
COMMUNITY SURVEY

WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT? This questionnaire will provide the City Council with a record of citizen comments, ideas and suggestions for the District. We want to hear your thoughts about a broad range of issues -- parking and circulation, bus and rail transportation, trails and bikeways, historic preservation, safety and security, and aesthetics.

HOW CAN I HELP? Please jot down your comments, ideas and suggestions on this survey. It's designed to be quick and easy to complete, and will help focus the Railroad District Master Plan on those issues of importance to the community. If you'd like, just drop the survey off at the lower level of City Hall, or mail it by Friday, September 5th to:

Community Development Department
City of San Luis Obispo
990 Palm Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-3249
Attention: Jeff Hook

REASONS I GO TO THE RAILROAD DISTRICT (check as many boxes as apply)

☐ Transportation (rail, bikeway, walkways, commuting)
☐ Shopping
☐ Services
☐ Dining out
☐ Residence
☒ Job
☐ Recreation
☐ Other _____

HOW OFTEN I GO TO THE RAILROAD DISTRICT

☒ Frequently (at least three times a week)
☐ Occasionally (on the average, once or twice a week)
☐ Infrequently (once a month or less)

community workshops and survey

Figure 3: Sample Community Survey (Page 2)

Railroad District Survey
Page 2

WHERE I LIVE

☒ CITY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
☐ OTHER _____

WHAT I LIKE MOST ABOUT THE RAILROAD DISTRICT Atmosphere

WHAT I LIKE LEAST ABOUT THE RAILROAD DISTRICT Lack of easy ways to cross tracks. Love in Sinsheimer Park area. Foot bridge in area of station will be out of way.

CHANGES/IMPROVEMENTS/SERVICES I WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN THE RAILROAD DISTRICT Foot bridge in Sinsheimer Park area. I see school kids crawling over and under trains.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS See Traffic on Santa Barbara is too heavy. Need more improvements - light at High Street. Sidewalks between High & 2nd - on the track side.

Jh/L:Rrworkshop.survey

- Install/repair sidewalks along Santa Barbara Street.
- Rehabilitate the railroad yard area to improve the appearance of this city gateway for rail travelers.
- Allow additional hotel/motel/bed and breakfast uses in the railroad area.
- Check into additional passenger train services, including additional spur tracks for Union Pacific.
- Investigate the potential for light rail service to North and South

At the workshop, a two-page Railroad District Survey was distributed to audience members. The purpose of the survey was threefold: 1) to identify issues, problems, and opportunities in the Railroad District from a community perspective; 2) to determine what community members liked “most” and “least” about the District; and 3) to solicit community suggestions for the Railroad District’s future – that is, to describe a “vision” for preserving what the community likes most while anticipating change and growth.

Community Survey Responses

Aspects of the Railroad District viewed as “Positive” by community members, in no specific order:

- Railroad District’s “atmosphere”
- friendliness
- spacious walkways
- quaint baggage wagon in use at the railroad depot
- the District’s historical character and associated businesses
- opportunities for train watching
- opportunities for sharing historic railroad information with railroad “buffs” and the public
- Park Hotel redevelopment and included businesses
- it’s an easy shortcut to Downtown

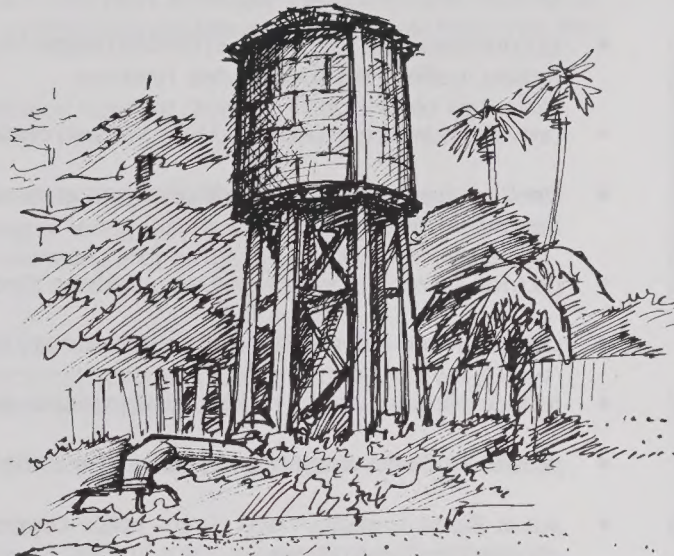
community workshops and survey

Positive comments continued:

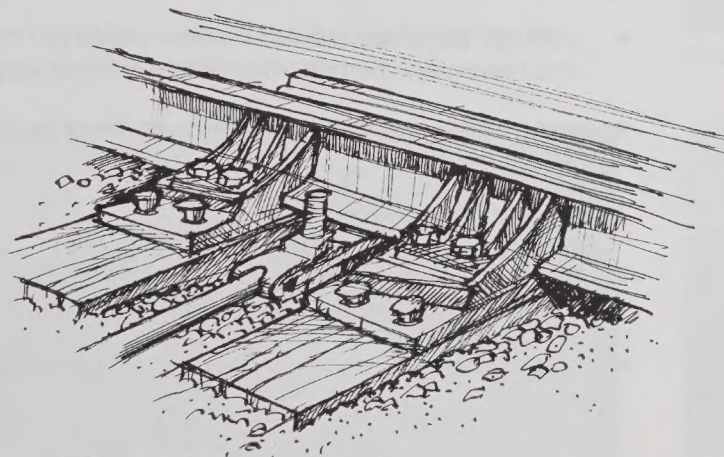
- good restaurants
- convenient train connections
- attractive "gateway" to the City
- convenient planned bikeway and pedestrian bridge
- close walking distance to residential neighborhoods
- it's "funky"
- rehabilitation of the historic water tower
- people-watching and activity

Aspects of the Railroad District viewed as negative by community members included:

- car traffic on Santa Barbara/Osos Street
- lack of parking
- transient camps
- lack of City involvement in historic restoration
- excessive trash/weeds/abandoned cars/graffiti
- groups congregating in front of AA building
- dusty
- inadequate lighting in some areas
- poorly maintained buildings along Santa Barbara Street



Historic Railroad Water Tower



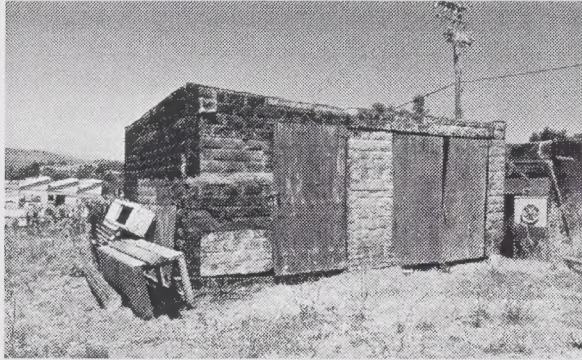
Switch track detail.

- trains blocking access across the railroad tracks
- multi-modal transit transfer center proposal due to noise and air quality impacts
- run-down appearance

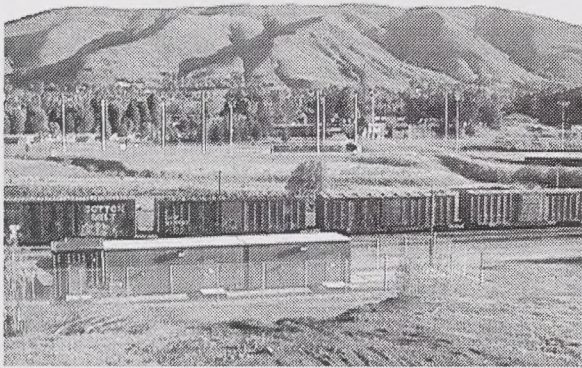
Citizens' recommended changes and/or improvements:

- minimize air quality impacts by limiting bus, car, and train idling
- maintain pedestrian access along both sides of the railroad right-of-way
- restore historic water tank to functioning status to encourage steam trains
- preserve and restore the historic Southern Pacific Freight Warehouse
- discourage transient camps
- redesign traffic circulation using one-way loops on Santa Barbara, Osos, Upham, and High Streets
- expand the Railroad Historic District to include the Ella Street neighborhood
- provide a railroad museum
- provide improved landscaping and maintenance
- expand bus service/connections
- accommodate taxi service with a sheltered waiting area
- develop a park and ride lot in the railroad area

community workshops and survey



Community members feel that buildings with a rundown appearance detract from the District and feel not enough is done to preserve historic buildings.



Improved pedestrian and bike access to Sinsheimer Park is needed for neighborhoods to the west of the railroad tracks.



Traffic congestion on Santa Barbara Street caused by left turning traffic.

Recommended changes continued:

- provide static and dynamic railroad displays
- accommodate shared uses in the old Freight Warehouse with leased concessions (food, bike rentals, coffee and donuts, deli, hobbies)
- provide sturdy, enclosed and locked trash enclosures
- the City should purchase additional 4.25 acres available near Humbert and Francis Streets for future parking needs
- provide better sidewalks on Santa Barbara Street
- provide more street lights and an ornamental fountain
- reduce parking assessments during construction of the Jennifer Street Bridge
- preserve all remaining historic structures in the railroad area
- solve Santa Barbara/Osos Street traffic congestion and speed problems with a one-way couplet circulation design
- extend the railroad bikeways to Cal Poly University on the north, and to Tank Farm Road on the south
- extend Bishop Street to South Street via bridge or underpass
- evaluate the entire railroad corridor within the City Limits; encourage attractive landscaping and discourage barbed wire, razor wire and ugly fencing
- route a bikeway from Santa Barbara Street or High Street to access the new Jennifer Street Bridge
- expand train service
- decrease the intensity of the multi-modal transit transfer center by spreading the impacts to other areas within the region, such as the Los Osos Valley Road neighborhood
- place historic railroad cars opposite the passenger depot

community workshops and survey

Community Workshop #2

On November 12, 1997, Community Workshop #2 was held to review the community survey responses and to review the Railroad District draft architectural guidelines. Comments from this second workshop are summarized below:

- Architectural guidelines should not dictate detailed building design. They should allow for design flexibility;
- Both sides of the railroad right of way are heavily used by the public as bikeways and walking paths, particularly for students walking or riding bicycles to the high school and to Cal Poly University. The City should try to maintain, and where possible, improve these routes;
- Pedestrians have a difficult time crossing Santa Barbara and Osos Streets due to the speed and volume of vehicle traffic, particularly at the intersections of Leff and Osos Streets (Gus's Grocery), and Church and Santa Barbara Streets (Del Monte Café);
- The City should protect residents along Church Street from inappropriate commercial development;
- Additional parking and improved enforcement of parking rules are needed in the Railroad Square area;
- Transient camps, particularly along the railroad right-of-way near Orcutt Road, and in the small creek running through the Southwood/McMillan Lane area, are resulting in vandalism, security, trash, and sanitation problems for nearby businesses and residents.
- The Cultural Heritage Committee should survey and evaluate the Railroad District for possible structures to include in the City's Master List of Historic Resources



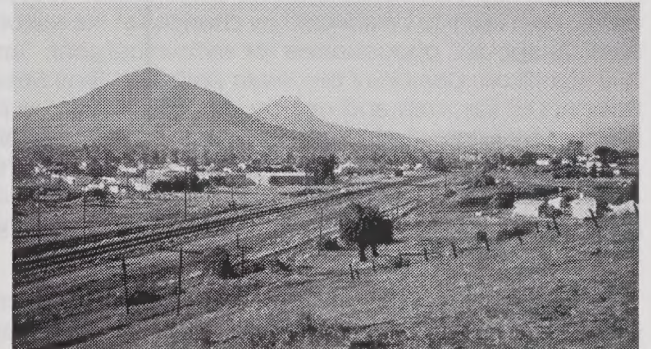
The depot is a positive feature of the District.



Future bike paths and connections are important to citizens.



The site of additional Amtrak parking and the proposed multi-modal transit transfer center (see page 70).



The openness of the District is an asset.

DISTRICT BOUNDARY and features

District Boundary

Figure 4 shows the boundaries of the Railroad District. It covers about one-half square mile (1.3 square kilometers), and extends along the railroad right-of-way for a distance of about 1.7 miles (2.74 kilometers) in roughly a north-south axis. The District includes the original railroad yard, plus residential and commercial-zoned property on the west side of the railroad right-of-way. Because of the District's linear shape, this plan divides it into three sub-areas to make it easier to graphically show the plan. Area 1 stretches from Johnson Avenue on the north to Santa Rosa Street. Area 2 includes Santa Rosa Street south to Lawrence Drive. And, Area 3 includes the railroad right-of-way from Lawrence Drive south to Orcutt Road. Houses, apartments, businesses, and warehouses with frontage on Church Street, Santa Barbara/Osos Street, Roundhouse Avenue and Emily Street are adjacent to and directly affected by traffic changes on Santa Barbara/Osos Street, the District's main transportation corridor. Osos Street links the District to Downtown San Luis Obispo, the Civic Center, and State Highway 101. Osos Street ends at Railroad Square, the historic heart of the Railroad District.

The Railroad District Plan boundary includes the most active and visible section of railroad right-of-way in San Luis Obispo County. While much of the original railroad yard is now gone, the widened right-of-way remains, allowing opportunities for additional rails and railroad facilities and for redevelopment with new uses. Consequently, the plan boundaries encompass: 1) those areas most likely to be affected by changes in the railroad area; 2) specific opportunities for redevelopment; and 3) a significant portion of the Santa Barbara/Osos Street Special Design Area and nearby properties likely to be affected by future street improvements. The residential neighborhoods east of the railroad are not included within the District. They are largely built out, do not provide street access to the railroad, and are not likely to undergo substantial use changes in the foreseeable future.

The District boundaries are intended to include several key features so that these can be addressed in the plan. These features and uses are listed in Figure 5.



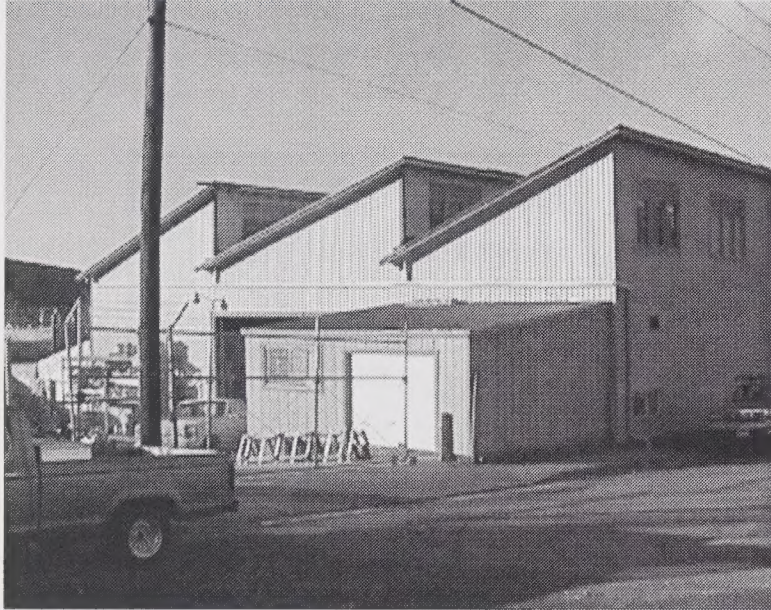
Figure 4 - District Boundaries and Key Features



DISTRICT BOUNDARY and features

Figure 5: Key Railroad District Features

Feature	Location	Reason for Inclusion
Johnson Avenue Bridge	Johnson at RR (railroad)	Possible bikeway/trail connection
Penny Lane/Fairview Street	Penny Lane at RR	Possible bike/ped bridge over RR
Railroad Square	SE end of Osos Street	Jennifer St. bridge; redevelopment
Apartments and houses	Church, Osos, Santa Barbara St.	Street improvements; historic preservation
Historic Water Tower	RR, N of Henry St.	Historic Rehabilitation; visual character
Historic Freight Warehouse	1940 Santa Barbara St.	MMTTC; historic preservation visual character
Industrial/Roundhouse Area	Emily and Roundhouse at RR	Redevelopment; historic preservation possible Bishop St. connection
Phase 1 Bikeway	Bushnell to Orcutt, along RR	Bike/pedestrian linkages; recreation
Linear RR Park	Sinsheimer Park at RR	Possible RR crossing; recreation
Gateway Staging area	McMillan to Orcutt along RR	Bikeway staging area; cleanup
SP Milling Warehouse	Roundhouse Ave at RR	Historic preservation; redevelopment;



Shed roofed buildings such as this one along High Street add to the District's industrial character.



A view of Terrace Hill from the Roundhouse site.

Visual Character Issues

The District is visually distinctive due to several positive factors: its visibility and open character; its natural and man-made focal points; and its historic structures. It is also distinctive due to several factors generally considered to be unattractive or negatives: abandoned or poorly maintained buildings, fences or sites; unsightly storage or equipment yards; trash and weeds; graffiti; utility structures, overhead utility lines, and billboards; and homeless encampments.

POSITIVE FACTORS

- **OPENNESS:** The railroad right-of-way cuts a wide, open corridor through San Luis Obispo. It ranges in width from 90 to over 300 feet; and most of the right-of-way is vacant except for railroad tracks and related equipment. Its open, linear form contrasts strongly with the densely developed neighborhoods which border it. The corridor provides views of the adjacent residential, commercial, and industrial uses. High ground to the east and west provides views into the corridor.
- **FOCAL POINTS:** San Luis Obispo has a distinctive natural setting due to the surrounding hills and ancient volcanic peaks or *morros*. These distinctive landforms give a sense of enclosure and create a strong visual image which contributes to San Luis Obispo's "sense of place." Terrace Hill, a 500-foot high hill just east of the District is a dominant natural feature and focal point. Other prominent focal points are the South Street Hills, visible to the southwest; and 1300-foot Cerro San Luis and 1500-foot Bishop Peak which are in a direct line of sight looking north along the railroad right-of-way when entering the District from the south. Man-made focal points include the historic Railroad Water Tower; the Park Hotel; the Railroad Square Building; the Jennifer Street Bridge; and the historic Southern Pacific Freight Warehouse.
- **HISTORIC STRUCTURES:** The Railroad District has the highest concentration of historic railroad buildings on the Central Coast. As late as the 1980s, over 20 railroad structures ranging from small sheds to a large locomotive turntable remained from the railroad's heyday. Today, most of the original railroad structures are gone; but some of the principal structures remain, still lending a rough-edged, industrial appearance to the District: the historic, 65,000 gallon Railroad Water Tower; the 5,000 square foot Southern Pacific Freight Warehouse; the Roundhouse foundation and Turntable site; and several historic buildings, including the Railroad Depot; Railway Express Agency building; Park Hotel; and Railroad Square building. Their impressive size, distinctive architecture, age, and location help give the District its unique visual character. These structures don't just "recall" the railroad's historic era; they are survivors of that era and continue its visual character into a modern setting. They are often what visitors and residents remember most about the Railroad District.

NEGATIVE FACTORS

- **ABANDONED AND NEGLECTED BUILDINGS:** By the 1960s, the railroad yard began to decline and with it, the adjacent buildings and uses once dependent on the railroad for access to outside markets. Gradually, many buildings and sites in and adjacent to the railroad right-of-way were either abandoned or neglected, giving a vacant, abandoned look to the railroad yard.
- **UNSIGHTLY STORAGE AND EQUIPMENT YARDS:** Railroads and industrial areas have historically gone hand in hand. Railroads are bordered by some of the least attractive parts of America's cities: trash dumps, junkyards, gravel pits and factories. The railroad's relationship to adjacent uses has changed, however. Railroad rights-of-way are now often viewed as community gateways. Ugly junkyards or industrial yards, concertina wire or continuous, uninteresting walls detract from the District's appearance and may create an impression that the community has "turned its back" on the railroad.
- **WEEDS, TRASH AND GRAFFITI:** Lack of property maintenance has caused weeds, trash and graffiti to accumulate, particularly in areas away from traffic and the public. This detracts from the District's appearance and reinforces its abandoned, neglected appearance, particularly in Areas 2 and 3.
- **UTILITY SHEDS AND OVERHEAD LINES:** Because the railroad area has for many years been largely vacant and considered by some a "waste place", it has been used for dumping fill and trash and contains an odd mixture of utility sheds, overhead utilities, billboards and miscellaneous abandoned "junk" unrelated to the railroad's historic structures and uses.
- **HOMELESS CAMPS:** Transients have camped in a wooded ravine north of the depot for many years. In recent years homeless camps have expanded into more visible areas along the railroad right-of-way such as near homes, businesses and pedestrian thoroughfares. These camps, which are typically identified by the presence of old bedding and refuse, are perceived as a security concern and can be an eyesore for residents and visitors.



Trash and junk in this yard detracts from the visual character of the District.



Transient bedding and supplies in a wooded area south of Sinsheimer Park.

historic resources

Historic Resources Overview

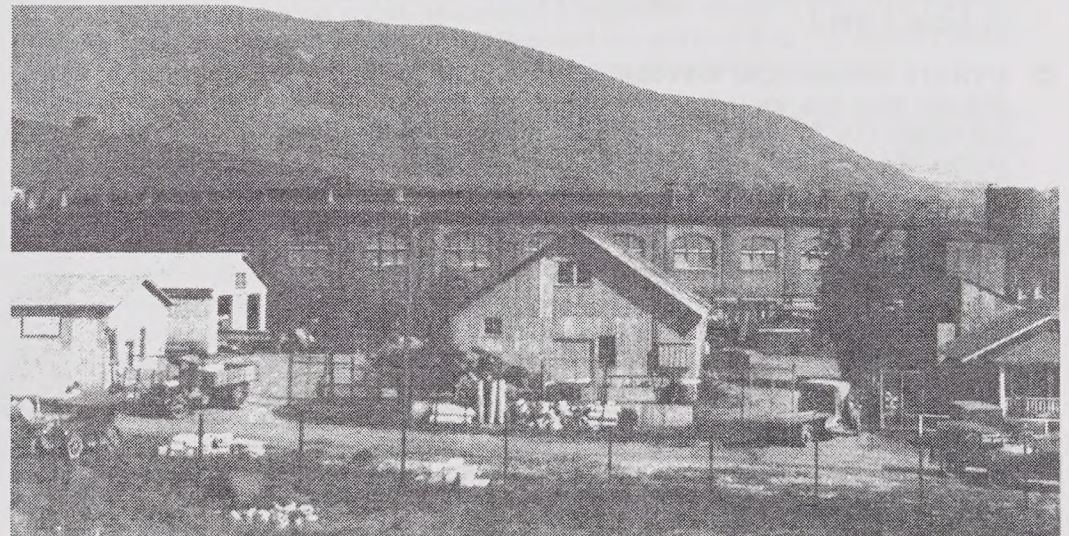
San Luis Obispo can trace its early growth and development to three main factors: the founding of Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa; the development of the railroads; and the founding of Cal Poly University. From the time of the Mission's founding in 1772 to the late 1800s, San Luis Obispo was a small, farming town and County seat. The town's population in 1870 was approximately 1500. With the inauguration of the City's first railroad in 1874 – the Pacific Coast Railway (PCR as it became known) — the town grew in size, population and regional importance with the advances in communication and increased trade made possible by the railroad. The PCR was a local, narrow gauge line which carried passengers and freight between San Luis Obispo, Port Harford and the little coastal town of Avila. It was later extended to Arroyo Grande, Santa Maria, and eventually as far south as Los Olivos in northern Santa Barbara County.

The narrow gauge railroad was centered near what is now the northeast corner of Broad and South Streets. Here, the PCR depot was built, providing passenger loading facilities. A spur line eventually linked the PCR's main yard on lower Higuera Street with the original Southern Pacific Depot located next to the present depot, on Railroad Avenue. The narrow-gauge railroad also operated a roundhouse, loading docks and warehouses. The PCR remained an important regional rail line, moving freight and passengers in the growing San Luis Obispo market, until the 1930s. For many years, the City was served by both the PCR and the Southern Pacific railroads.

Southern Pacific Railroad, or the Espee as it was sometimes called, was extended from San Jose south to Santa Margarita, and then, after many delays, extended along the tortuous route over the Cuesta Grade to San Luis Obispo. In May 1894, the first Southern Pacific train arrived in San Luis Obispo. The final push over Cuesta Grade was a considerable engineering achievement, requiring seven tunnels, many deep earth fills, a long horseshoe curve, a long-span steel trestle over Stenner Creek, plus the toil of thousands of railroad laborers. It took five years and \$1.8 million dollars to cover the short distance between Santa Margarita and San Luis Obispo. After 1894, Southern Pacific



The last steam locomotive in the Roundhouse, 1957.

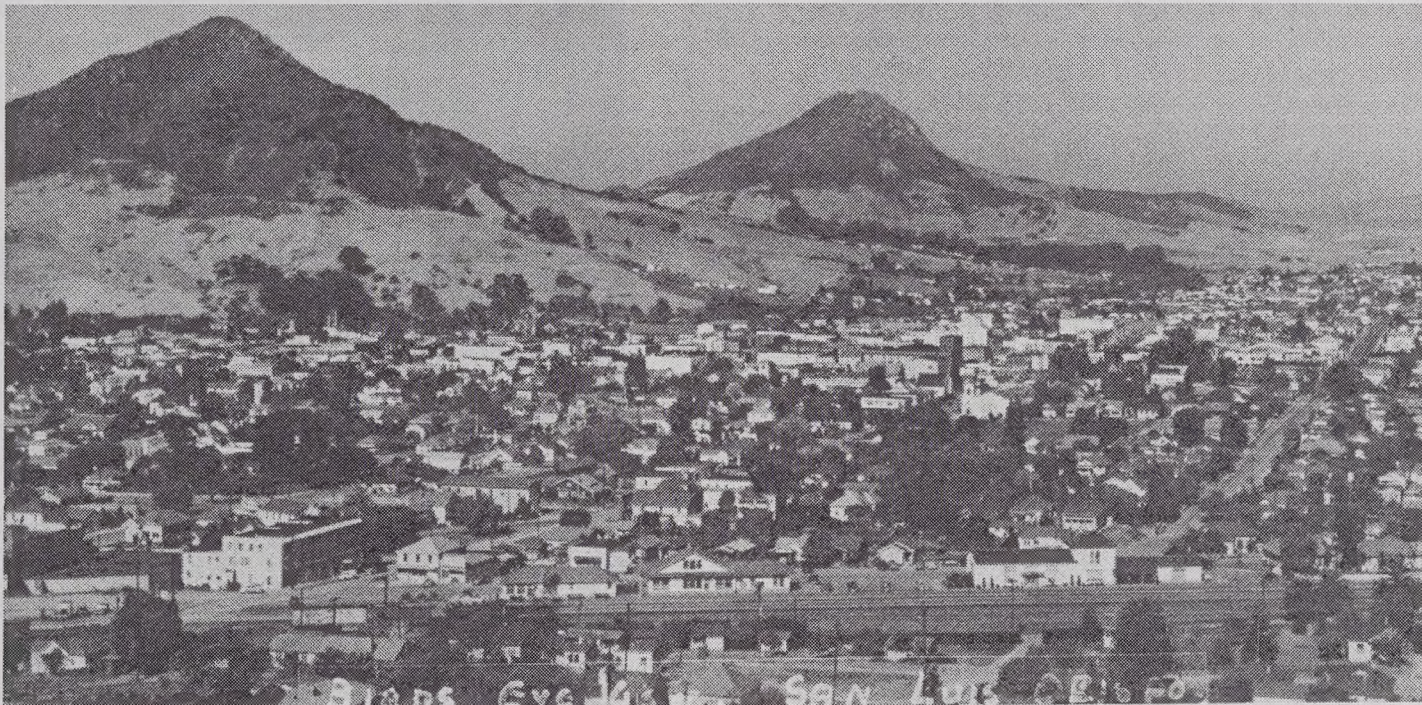


A view of the rear of the Roundhouse, looking east with Santa Barbara Street in the foreground.

gradually “closed the gap” by laying track from Ellwood in Santa Barbara County, northward to a new Coast Route stop called Surf, and by laying track southward from San Luis Obispo. By April, 1901 the gap was closed and the first trains from both San Francisco and Los Angeles came through San Luis Obispo, finally completing Espee’s Coast Route. From the arrival of the first Espee train, the future and physical form of San Luis Obispo were to be shaped and forever changed by the railroad.

From the early 1900s through the 1950s, the City’s railroad yard was the primary layover and support facility on the Coast Route. The City grew slowly but steadily until the 1940s, when the outbreak of World War II marked a new period of growth and expansion. The establishment of Camp San Luis Obispo Military Training facility, just north of town, and development of Camp Roberts in the North County dramatically increased the flow of people and goods into and from San Luis Obispo, and thus, expanded the role and importance of the City’s railroad yard and support facilities. By this time, the Southern Pacific Railroad was the City’s largest employer, with the railroad yard extending from Johnson Avenue on the north to Francis Avenue on the south.

By the early 1950s with the advent of diesel locomotives, a large maintenance yard was no longer needed to service the now obsolete steam locomotives. The “last steam locomotive”, #2344, was photographed in the Roundhouse in 1957. By 1959, the Roundhouse, too, was gone. The era of steam trains was over. The railroad yard then began a slow but steady decline until renewed public and private investment began in the 1980s.



A bird's eye view of the District and the City in the 1950's, with Cerro San Luis and Bishop Peak in the background.

historic resources

Historic Structures and Sites

Figure 6 shows existing historic resources and the locations of railroad structures which have been removed. Some of the principle structures are described below. This inventory is intended to: 1) provide the historic documentation for designation of a Railroad Historic District; and to 2) identify historic railroad structures to be preserved as new development occurs in the Railroad District. Many of the structures remaining from the railroad era are still in use, like the Railroad Square Office Building or the Park Hotel. Others are historic artifacts or remnants of once larger structures, such as the Railroad Water Tower or the Roundhouse foundation. While much of the original Railroad Yard has been removed, the community is fortunate in that it still retains enough of the most important railroad structures to preserve the architectural character and atmosphere typical of early railroad yards throughout California and the United States.

1. Johnson Avenue Bridge - Built in 1956, the Johnson Avenue Bridge marks the northern gateway to the Railroad Yard and replaced an earlier bridge built in the late 1800s. Until 1956, the single-lane undercrossing allowed only one car at a time to pass under the railroad tracks. Southern Pacific Railroad paid for the bridge replacement project, and with the approval of the City, removed the Fairview Street Bridge just south of Johnson Avenue because it had become dilapidated.

2. Fairview Street Bridge (demolished) - The 1926 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the bridge as a 50-foot wide by 100-foot long bridge, spanning the narrow railroad corridor between what is now Fairview Street and Penny Lane. The wooden bridge allowed vehicles and pedestrians to cross the railroad tracks when the Johnson Avenue underpass was flooded or congested. Southern Pacific Railroad removed the old bridge when the replacement Johnson Avenue Bridge was completed.

3. Southern Pacific Railroad Water Tower - The historic Railroad Water Tower appears very much the same as when it was built in 1940. It is located in its original position, across from the City's "new" railroad depot, built during World War II. The water tower was built to save time during train stops in San Luis Obispo. At that time, up to 10 passenger trains per day stopped in San Luis Obispo, and the steam locomotives had to stop twice: once at the Roundhouse to take on water and again at the depot to load and unload passengers. The 65,000 gallon steel tank allowed the locomotives to take on water while stopped at the depot. The tower and tank were in service until 1956 when Southern Pacific decommissioned the last of the steam locomotives. It was purchased by the City of San Luis Obispo in 1982 to preserve the structure which had been proposed for demolition by Southern Pacific Railroad. Restoration of the tower and tank was completed in 1998.



The Johnson Street underpass in 1956.



The water tower, restored in 1998, appears much as it did when it was built in 1940.

4. Southern Pacific Railroad Signal Repair Shop (demolished) - Located on a widened area of railroad right-of-way just below the Railroad Water Tower and opposite the railroad depot, the 25 foot by 50 foot Signal Repair Shop was used up until 1994 to repair track switches and signals. It also had a small office, fenced yard and several small shed additions for storing parts. The date of construction is unknown, but its design was consistent with standard railroad architectural plans for "signal repair shops" dated 1906, and it is shown in the 1926 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Badly damaged by fire in 1994, the shop was later demolished.

5. Southern Pacific Railroad Train Depot - This "Spanish Colonial" style depot was completed in 1942 at the south end of Santa Rosa Street at Railroad Avenue and was restored by the City in 1988. It is essentially unchanged from its original design, with only minor changes to the interior and baggage areas. The depot's California Spanish Revival theme epitomized the Railroad's promotion of California as a land of romance and colorful Spanish heritage.

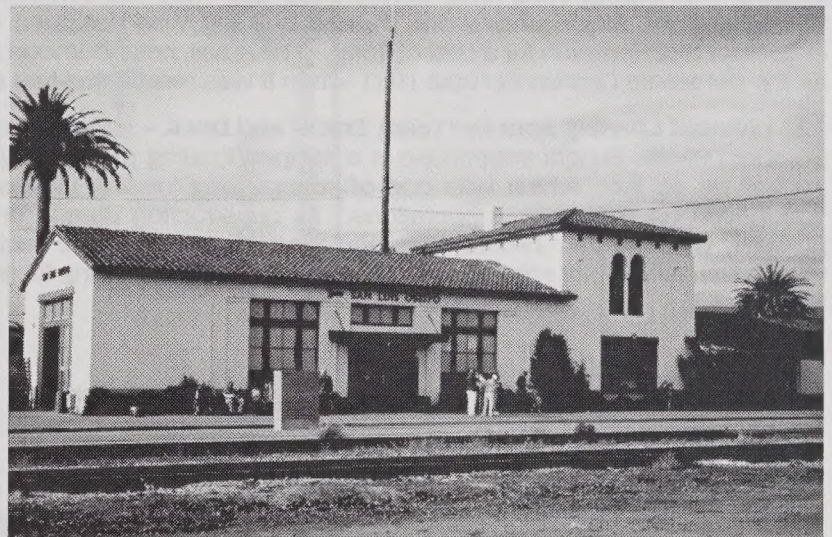
6. The Old Railroad Depot (demolished) - Located just south of the existing railroad depot, the City's original train station was built in 1894. It was a 30 foot by 90 foot, two-story wood structure with a steeply pitched gable roof and clapboard siding, typical of many train stations built by Southern Pacific Railroad around the turn of the 19th century. When the "new" depot was built in 1942, the old station was remodeled and remained in use for railroad offices until 1968. It was demolished in 1971.

7. Southern Pacific Transportation Company Building - This single-story, wood-framed building was built in the early 1900s to house Southern Pacific Railroad offices, and later, the Railway Express Agency. The building was stuccoed over in later years but retains its original form. At the time this plan was prepared, the building was in use by Union Pacific Railroad.

8. Alamo Club Building - Located at 1814 Osos Street, this two-story wood structure was built in 1912 for R.M. Barnard as a store at a cost of \$400.00. Although it has been remodeled several times, the building has retained most of its original form and materials.



The original Southern Pacific railroad depot was built in 1895 and in use until 1971.



The "new" depot was built in 1942 and restored by the City in 1988.

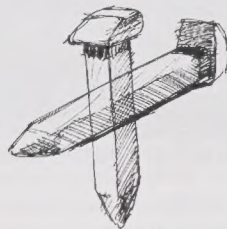
historic resources

9. Park Hotel - The Park Hotel, at 1815 Osos Street, was built in 1906 as a three-story, wood-framed boarding house operated by owner Dora Reidy. Its original construction cost was \$4,000. Her husband, James Reidy, was an engineer for the railroad. The hotel catered mainly to railroad employees, at least through the early 1950s when San Luis Obispo was a railroad center. An electrical call box in the hotel connected the train station with the hotel manager who could relay calls to railroad workers and passengers staying at the hotel. The hotel changed hands several times, becoming the Axtell Hotel from 1920 to 1932 and the Hotel Park in 1938. The hotel was rehabilitated in 1983, with commercial uses and restaurants on the ground floor and 21 apartments above.

10. Railroad Square Building - The Railroad Square Building is located at 1880 Santa Barbara Street and was built in 1912 as the Channel Commercial Company building, a wholesale grocery business. The three-story brick and concrete structure with basement was designed by J.P. Krempel and W.E. Erkes, and was built by Frank S. Doramus for a cost of \$18,000. Major additions were done in 1916 by James J. Maino Construction and 1929 by W.J. Charters. The building was designed for the transshipment of produce to and from San Luis Obispo and had a spur track adjacent to the rear loading dock. A major building rehabilitation to office use was done in 1983.

11. Del Monte Grocery - Located at 1901 Santa Barbara Street, the Del Monte Café building was built in 1922 as a "barber shop and store" for owner J.R. Robbins. The false front, single-story wood framed building was designed and built by contractor Neil Hampton for a cost of \$600. The small, neighborhood store existed as the Del Monte Grocery up until 1981 when it was remodeled into a restaurant.

12. Railroad Loading Spur or "Team Track" and Dock - Just south of the historic Southern Pacific Freight Warehouse is a ramped loading platform, approximately 10 feet by 45 feet, which was one of several long loading platforms near the warehouse used for freight operations. Its construction date is unknown, but probably dates to the 1940s. This and the platform along the track side of the warehouse are all that remains of once extensive freight loading facilities.



The Park Hotel, built in 1906.



Originally the Del Monte Grocery, now the Del Monte Cafe, built in 1922.

Figure 6: Historic Resources



13. Southern Pacific Freight Warehouse - Built around 1895, this warehouse is believed to be one of the oldest existing railroad structures in San Luis Obispo County. This 50 foot by 100 foot building was once a primary freight loading point for both the Pacific Coast and Southern Pacific Railroads, linking San Luis Obispo with other towns in the County, State and Nation. At the time this plan was being prepared, the warehouse was being used for storage and was in stable condition.

14. Southern Pacific Milling Company Warehouse - Built sometime between 1903 and 1926, this long, rectangular two-story building served as a general warehouse and lumber shed for the Southern Pacific Milling Company and is visible in older photos of the railroad yard. It was still in use for lumber storage by The Pacific Home "Do It" Center at the time this plan was prepared.

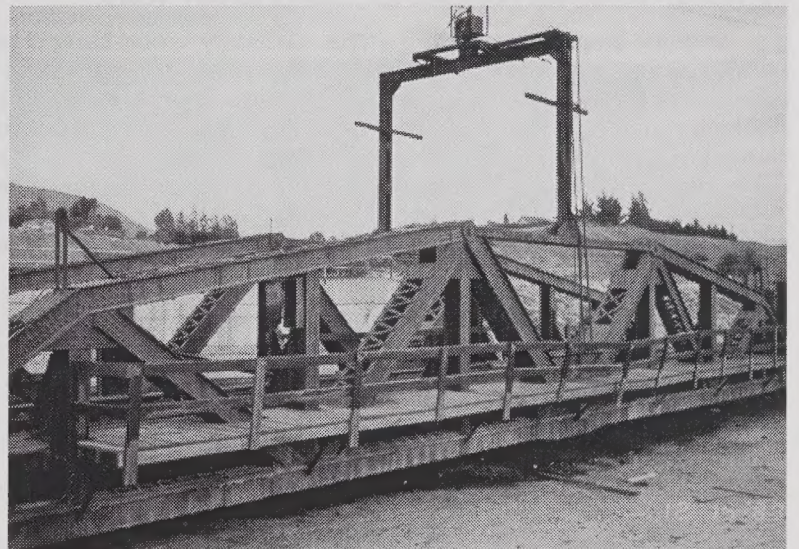
15. Railroad Turntable and Roundhouse (partially demolished) - Just south of Roundhouse Avenue (formerly Fletcher Avenue) are the remnants of the Railroad Turntable and Roundhouse. Built in 1894, the Roundhouse was an imposing structure which dominated the railroad yard and was visible from a wide area. The semi-circular brick building was equivalent in height to a three-story building and could service at least 15 locomotives at a time. Locomotives would exit the Roundhouse onto a short section of track on the Turntable, one at a time, to be turned to match up with rails leading to the yard and the main lines. The Roundhouse was decommissioned in the late 1950s with the end of the Steam Era and was dismantled in 1959. In 1998, the foundation and retaining wall of the Roundhouse and Turntable still remain. The Turntable consisted of a circular concrete well approximately 75 feet in diameter and six feet deep. The central superstructure, known as the Turntable Bridge, consisted of riveted steel girders with wood decking and steel rails. The Turntable was cut up and sold for scrap in 1993 by Southern Pacific Railroad. The east concrete retaining wall that formed part of the Turntable well still remains and is marked with the date 1923, embossed into the concrete.

16. Foundations, Railroad Outbuildings - Just south of the Roundhouse site are two concrete foundations remaining from previous railroad buildings. Both probably date from the early 1920s and were associated with the Roundhouse and Turntable. One, a bunker-like structure, may have served as the powerhouse for the turntable operation. The other foundation was probably one of the many shop buildings located in the railroad yard. The buildings which once stood on these foundations were retired by the railroad and removed in 1982.

17. Drainage Culvert at McMillan - A stone- and concrete arched culvert bridge dating back to 1928 or earlier, creates an 8 foot high tunnel under the railroad tracks, built to accommodate surface water runoff from the Johnson Avenue Area. The tunnel crosses in the area between Sinsheimer Park and McMillan Avenue.



The Southern Pacific Freight Warehouse (existing)



The Turntable, used to guide locomotives into the Roundhouse, was demolished in 1993.

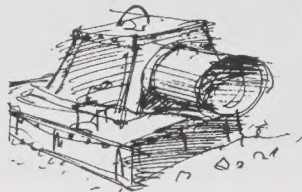
historic resources

18. Call/Parkview Hotel - Also called "The Establishment", this two-story rectangular boarding house is located at 1703 Santa Barbara Street (southwest corner of Santa Barbara and Upham Streets). Built around 1886 by Silas B. Call, the building has operated as a hotel and later, boarding house for travelers, railroad workers, and Cal Poly University students. The building's location made it ideal for travelers and railroad workers throughout the years, and its construction in the late 1800s marks it as one of the first residences in San Luis Obispo built in response to railroad expansion.

19. William M. Duff House - This two-story, wood-framed house, located at 1717 Santa Barbara Street, was originally built for William M. Duff in 1901 as a single-story, six-room Queen Anne cottage; the second story was added one year later. William M. Duff was a prominent city businessman who owned the Farmer's Cash Store, located in the Mason Building at 839 Marsh Street. The house was later sold to T.A. and Mary Parsons in 1902 who converted the home to rental apartments, and it later served the needs of railroad workers until about 1956, the end of the Railroad Steam Era in San Luis Obispo. Since 1956 the building has housed college students and other residents and was in poor condition until it was rehabilitated in 1993.

20. Alexander Galewski House - Located at 1725 Santa Barbara Street, this house is considered an excellent example of "Railroad Vernacular" style of housing built in California around the turn of the century, near the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks. Built in 1904 for Alexander Galewski, a saloon keeper and longtime city resident, the house was owner occupied for most of its 90+ years.

21. Tribune-Republic Building - This two-story wood-framed building at 1763 Santa Barbara was built in 1873 as an inexpensive commercial structure. It is believed to be the oldest wooden commercial structure in San Luis Obispo. It appears much as it did when built at its original location on Morro Street. It was moved to its present location in 1905. The building housed four successive and concurrent newspapers: The Tribune; the South Coast; the Southern California Advocate; and the Daily Republic. Later, the building served as a hotel annex and rooming house. It was remodeled in 1991 into three residential apartments. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places.



The Call/Parkview Hotel, built around 1886, is currently group housing.



William F. Duff House, built in 1901.

Historic Preservation Issues

Citizens have appreciated the Railroad District's historic "feeling" and special visual character for many years. The General Plan identifies historic resource preservation as an important goal. In the 1980s, the City adopted a Historical Preservation Program which identified important historic resources and tools to preserve them. During the 1980s, the City participated in the restoration of the Park Hotel, the Southern Pacific Train Depot and parking area; and the Railroad Water Tower. Despite these efforts, the Railroad District has lost several important historic resources in recent years and others are threatened due to neglect, weathering, vandalism, or demolition. The original owner of most of the historic resources, Southern Pacific Transportation Company, sold its rolling stock, land and support facilities to Union Pacific (UP) in 1997. Therefore, the City will seek the cooperation and support of Union Pacific to help preserve railroad heritage sites and structures. To preserve the remaining historic railroad resources, the community needs to address several key issues:

- **HISTORIC RESOURCES ARE NOT CLEARLY IDENTIFIED** - Most historic resources exist on private property. Some historic resources may have been lost because the owners were unclear regarding the resources' historic significance or the City's preservation policies.
- **HISTORIC RESOURCES ARE AT RISK** - Past efforts to protect some historic railroad structures have failed, in part, due to the City's perceived lack of jurisdiction over railroad company activities. The State Historic Preservation Office has determined that part of the Railroad District, as shown in Figure 5, is eligible for the National Register. Local, state and federal rules need to work together to protect remaining resources and to be communicated clearly to the District's property owners. Establishing a Railroad Historic District is an important step in protecting historic structures and sites. Property owners' participation is needed to protect historic resources from loss through vandalism, fire or neglect.
- **NEW DEVELOPMENT MAY NOT REFLECT THE DISTRICT'S HISTORIC CHARACTER** - New development is changing the Railroad District. In opinion surveys, citizens expressed a desire to retain the Railroad District's architectural character. Contrasting or contemporary architectural styles can detract from the District's character.
- **HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES ARE NOT PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE AND/OR VISIBLE** - Preservation efforts will be enhanced by improved public access and visibility for historic structures. These historic features can inform people about the railroad, making historic preservation a shared community value. Accessibility may involve walkways, bikepaths, signs, public art and historic displays.



The Railroad Square Building, built in 1912, is on the City's Master List of Historical Resources.

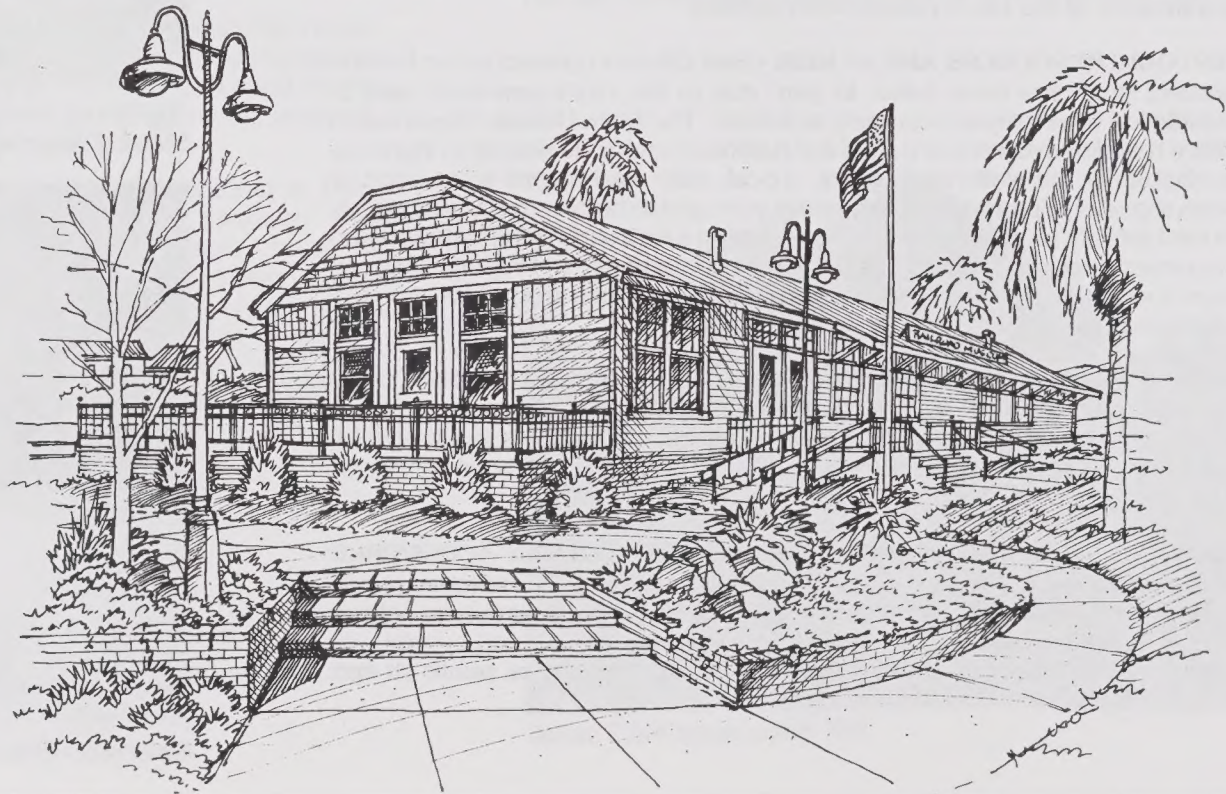


Signal Repair Shop, destroyed by fire in 1994.

historic resources

- **THE RAILROAD IS A HISTORIC GATEWAY TO THE COMMUNITY** - San Luis Obispo has several attractive "gateways", including the railroad corridor and State highways 101, 1, and 227 where these routes enter the City. While each played important roles in the City's early development and growth, only the Railroad Area has retained much of its original layout and visual character. Visitors arriving by rail can see a range of historic architectural styles and structures in Railroad Square which exemplify the community's commitment to historic preservation.
- **SOME PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FACILITIES NEED REPAIRS OR IMPROVEMENT** - Some public improvements in the Railroad District, such as sidewalks, curb and gutter, and lighting have not received the same attention as they have in other commercial districts. Nonconforming signs, dilapidated buildings and fencing, barbed or concertina wire, graffiti, unsightly or unscreened yards and storage sites, and abandoned vehicles are problems under private control which detract from the District's historic setting and significance. Improving these conditions will require cooperation and concerted effort by both the City and the District's property owners.
- **BUILDING CODES AND ZONING REGULATIONS HAVE NOT BEEN CONSISTENTLY FOLLOWED** - Illegal demolitions and construction, and nonconforming zoning conditions adversely affect the historic character of the District and have been problems in the past. City regulations must be clearly communicated to property owners with appropriate follow-up action to achieve compliance.
- **ECONOMIC HEALTH AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION ARE RELATED** - The success of historic preservation efforts depends, in part, on improving the District's economic health, appearance and user convenience (i.e. parking, lighting, signage, seating, and traveler services). The District's value stems not just from its historic character but from its historic role as an important commercial and transportation hub and center of community activity. City policies should focus on ways to redefine and reinforce the District's economic health and importance.

Adapting historic structures for new uses insures preservation of the structure and can benefit the District's economy. This rendering shows the Southern Pacific Freight Warehouse as a Railroad Museum. This concept for reuse is supported by the Railroad District Plan (see page 52.)



Evolution of Land Use in the District

Early city maps and photos show the area within Railroad District as being mostly vacant land with scattered houses, farms and dirt roads. A horse-drawn street car linked the area with the Downtown and with the Pacific Coast Railway's depot and freight operations in the South Higuera Street area. By 1903, Sanborn Fire Insurance maps show an established pattern of mixed residential and commercial uses, with new dwellings along the west side Santa Barbara and Osos Streets, and lumber yards and commercial shipping along the east side, adjacent to the railroad. By 1926, the Sanborn Map shows a bustling Railroad District with a broad range of commercial, residential and industrial uses, as listed in Figure 7.

The District's appearance and economic activity declined in the late 1960s and early 1970s as freight and passenger rail operations were cut back. Some railroad-related buildings and businesses were abandoned, neglected, or converted to other uses as businesses long dependent on the railroad adapted to change. Since then, commercial activity in Railroad Square has rebounded. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Railroad Square Building was remodeled for offices, and the Park Hotel was rehabilitated for commercial uses on the ground floor with two levels of affordable apartments above. At the request of area property owners, the City rezoned the Railroad Square area in the mid-1980s from Service Commercial (C-S) to General Retail (C-R) to reflect that area's growing concentration of retail, restaurants and offices. Through state and federal grants and property owner support, the City purchased railroad property and rebuilt the parking lot and rehabilitated the railroad depot.

During the early 1990s, the District continued its slow, steady redevelopment. City Fire Station No. 1 was built at the corner of Santa Barbara, Broad and South Streets; and the railroad depot baggage area and passenger waiting facilities were improved. New passenger seating, waiting platforms, and safety lighting were installed to accommodate the San Diegan rail service which began in 1995. In 1998, the City completed construction of the Jennifer Street bridge, linking the Ella Street neighborhood with the Railroad District and Downtown. In recent years, the most notable private development has been the construction of detached, low- and medium-density housing in the Terrace Hill and Bishop Street area, adjacent to but outside the District.

**Figure 7: Railroad District Uses Shown
in the 1926 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map**

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ➤ two duplex apartments | ➤ lumber yard and planing mill |
| ➤ three fourplex apartments | ➤ bulk gasoline storage |
| ➤ three boarding houses | ➤ California State Highway Commission
Maintenance Station |
| ➤ one hotel | ➤ Southern Pacific Railroad Depot |
| ➤ four retail stores | ➤ railroad office buildings |
| ➤ two restaurants | ➤ railroad roundhouse and turntable |
| ➤ two grocery stores | ➤ railroad freight sheds/loading docks |
| ➤ barber shop | ➤ railroad shops and yards |
| ➤ wholesale produce warehouse | ➤ City park |
| ➤ Southern Pacific Milling Company | |

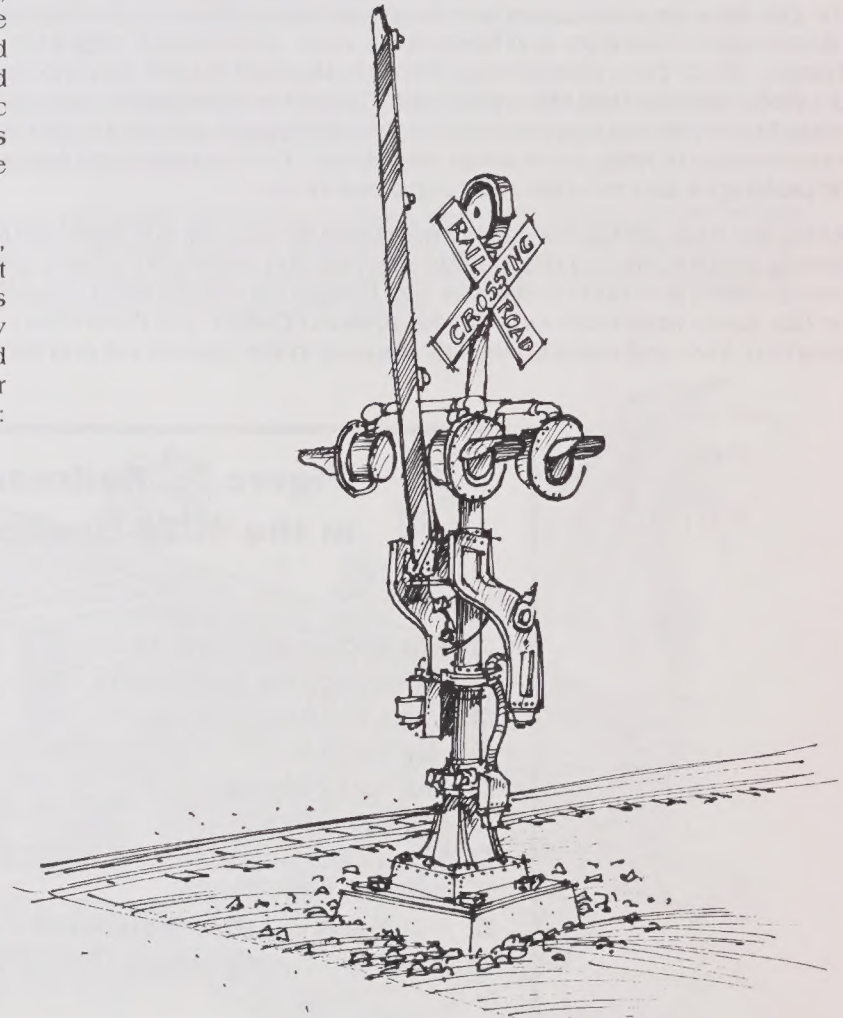
land use

Land Use Patterns

Figure 8 shows City-designated land uses in the District and surrounding areas in 1997. The General Plan designates most of the Railroad District as “Services and Manufacturing”, intended for business services, wholesaling and retail sales of large items, and light manufacturing. Railroad Square, the small area located at the south end of Osos Street where it meets the railroad, is designated General Retail. Medium-Density Residential abuts the commercial areas along Church, Osos-Santa Barbara, and Santa Rosa Streets; and along most of the District’s eastern boundary. Offices are located along the District’s northeastern edge, where French Hospital stands. Parkland is designated along the southeast boundary, near Sinsheimer Park. A small, City-owned parcel located at the corner of Santa Barbara and Osos Streets is designated for public parkland and has been referred to as “El Triangulito Park”, although the small park has no official name. Figure 8 also shows the zoning designations in and adjacent to the District.

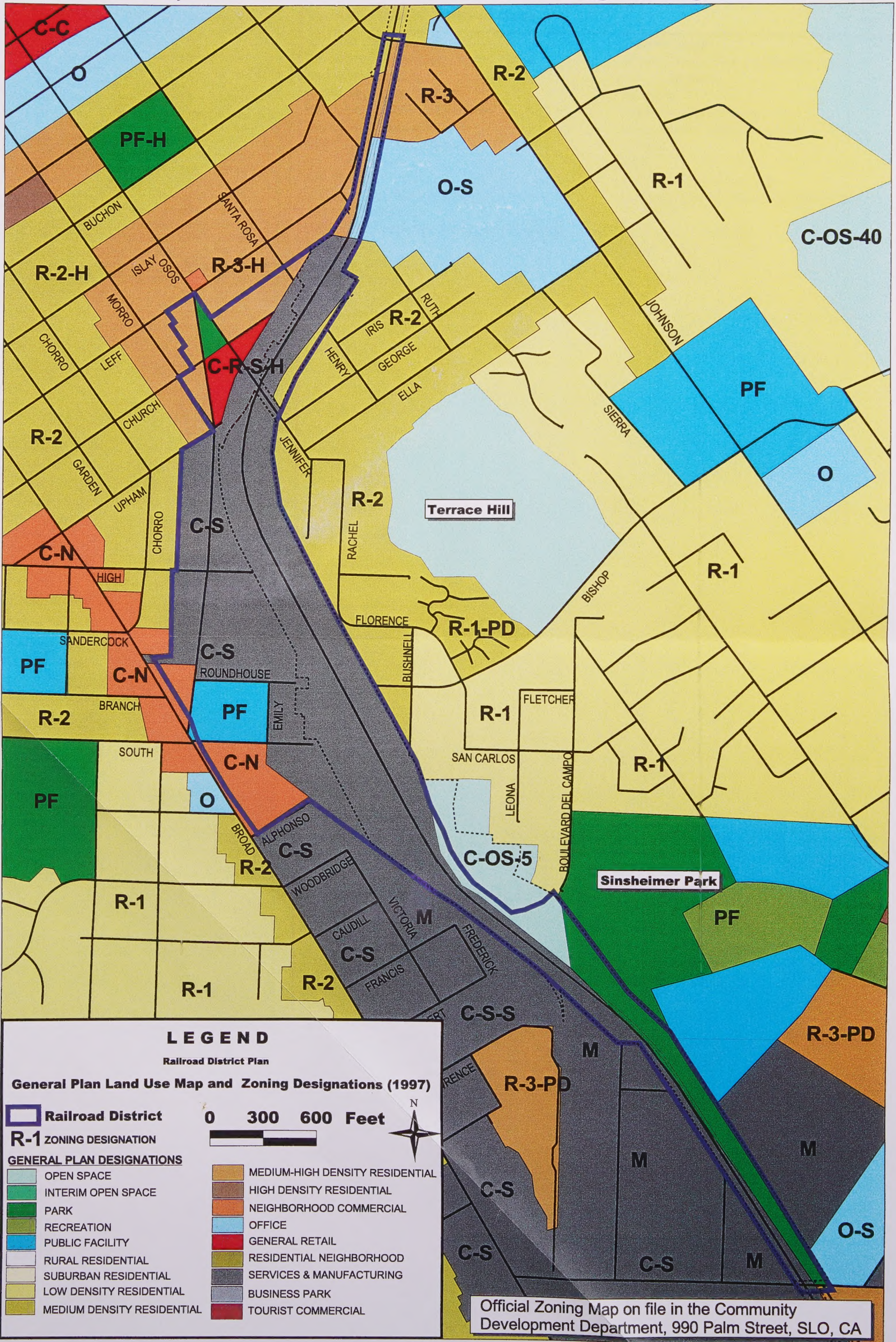
The Railroad District continues to be one of the City’s most diverse neighborhoods, where light industrial, retail, office, residential, recreation and transportation uses meet in a relatively compact geographic area. This mix of uses is both part of the District’s attraction, as well as its greatest challenge. The mix of uses can lead to compatibility problems. Yet, this historic mix of uses has created an active, diverse neighborhood which has a discernible “synergy” – an assembly of uses which complement one another and as a result, have a vitality that is more than just the sum of its parts. For example:

- public transportation creates a market which supports retail and restaurant uses;
- apartments and houses provide 24-hour security and stability and benefit from public transit facilities;
- offices add to the District’s daytime activity level, help support the retail businesses, and can benefit from expanded public transit and rail services;
- service-commercial businesses can benefit from their proximity to the railroad’s shipping facilities;
- a small, neighborhood park provides opportunities for lunching, passive recreation, and public art display;
- bikeways provide a major north-south arterial linking several residential neighborhoods with commercial districts, San Luis Obispo High School, and Cal Poly University; and
- residents and employees can live close to their jobs and/or public transit, potentially reducing vehicle trips and emissions, and traffic congestion by using bikeways, rail and public transit.



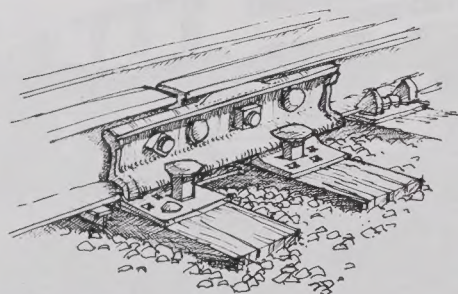
Crossing gate to protect automobile traffic.

Figure 8: General Plan Land Use
and Zoning Designations



Allowed Uses

Although small, the District includes 7 land use zones, allowing a wide range of uses. These zones are: R-3 (Medium-High Density Residential), C-R-S-H (Retail-Commercial, Special Considerations/Historic District), C-S (Service Commercial), C-N (Neighborhood Commercial), PF (Public Facility), C/OS (Conservation/Open Space), and M (Manufacturing). To address special concerns of noise, land use compatibility, and historic preservation, the "S" (Special Considerations) and "H" (Historic) combining district designations have been added to some areas. Some of the principal types of allowed uses are listed in Figure 9. Not all of the listed uses are allowed everywhere in the District; and some uses are allowed but require approval of a conditional use permit by the City. For a detailed list of allowed and conditionally allowed uses, including descriptions of use permits, parking, and property development standards, refer to the Zoning Regulations.



Detail of a "fishplate".

Figure 9: List of Allowed Uses

Advertising and Related Services	Manufacturing
Agriculture - Grazing and Outdoor Crops	Motels, Hotels, Bed and Breakfast Inns, Hostels
Amusement Arcades	Museums
Athletic and Health Clubs	Nightclubs, Discotheques, etc.
Auto Repair and Related Services	Organizations' Offices and Meeting Rooms
Banks and Savings and Loans	Offices
Barbers, Hairstylists, Manicurists, Tattoo Parlors	Parks
Bars, Taverns	Parking (as a principle use)
Bowling Alleys, Skating Rinks	Photofinishing and Photocopying Services
Broadcast Studios	Pool Halls
Building and Landscape Maintenance Services	Printing and Publishing
Bus Stations	Public Assembly Facilities
Caretakers' Quarters	Railroad Yards, Stations, Crew Facilities
Catering Services	Repair Services
Churches	Research and Development
Circus, Carnivals, Fairs, Festivals	Restaurants, Sandwich Shops, Takeout Food, etc.
Contractors	Retail Sales
Convalescent Hospitals, Residential Care Facilities	Schools
Day Care	Theaters
Delivery and Private Postal Services	Trucking/Taxi Service
Dwellings	Utility Companies
Educational Conferences	Veterinarian, Animal Hospitals, Boarding and Grooming Services
Homeless Shelters	Warehousing, Mini-Storage, Moving Companies
Hospitals	Wholesale and Mail-order Houses
Laboratories	
Libraries	

Development Trends

Figure 10 shows recent and anticipated development in and adjacent to the Railroad District. In 1998, several factors are fueling the District's gradual resurgence:

- vacant railroad right-of-way may be available for sale or lease for new public or private uses;
- increased commercial property values citywide, making vacant or underutilized buildings more attractive;
- expanded rail passenger service and support facilities, increasing the District's visibility and importance;
- increased public investment in the District for transportation-related improvements;
- increased traffic volumes on Santa Barbara Street, totaling about 16,000 vehicles per day.

These factors suggest that the Railroad District is likely to change more rapidly in the next decade than it did in the previous one, as vacant or underutilized properties are redeveloped. While the District's eclectic mix of uses will probably continue, economic factors will favor uses with higher potential returns per square foot than past uses such as warehousing, wholesale outlets and storage yards, a change which has occurred in railroad areas in many California cities. The demand for parking, high-quality office space, tourist-oriented eating and drinking places and sales and services in Railroad Square is likely to grow. With its remaining warehousing and proximity to the railroad, the Roundhouse/Emily Street area, Area 2, lends itself to retail sales of large merchandise for homeowners, businesses and the professional design trades. In the "Little Italy" neighborhood adjacent to Area 3 of the District, there is a mix of uses including dwellings with on-site cottage industries. Area 3 might accommodate some of the demand for live/work dwellings. In this area, zoning should encourage the development of innovative, live/work units, artist lofts and other mixed use developments similar to the Little Italy neighborhood. Based on land use potential, zoning, lot configuration and size, and demand, the following land uses may increase in the Railroad District:

- Retail Sales - appliances, furniture and furnishings, home improvement;
- Retail sales and rentals - specialties
- Restaurants and sandwich shops, takeout food



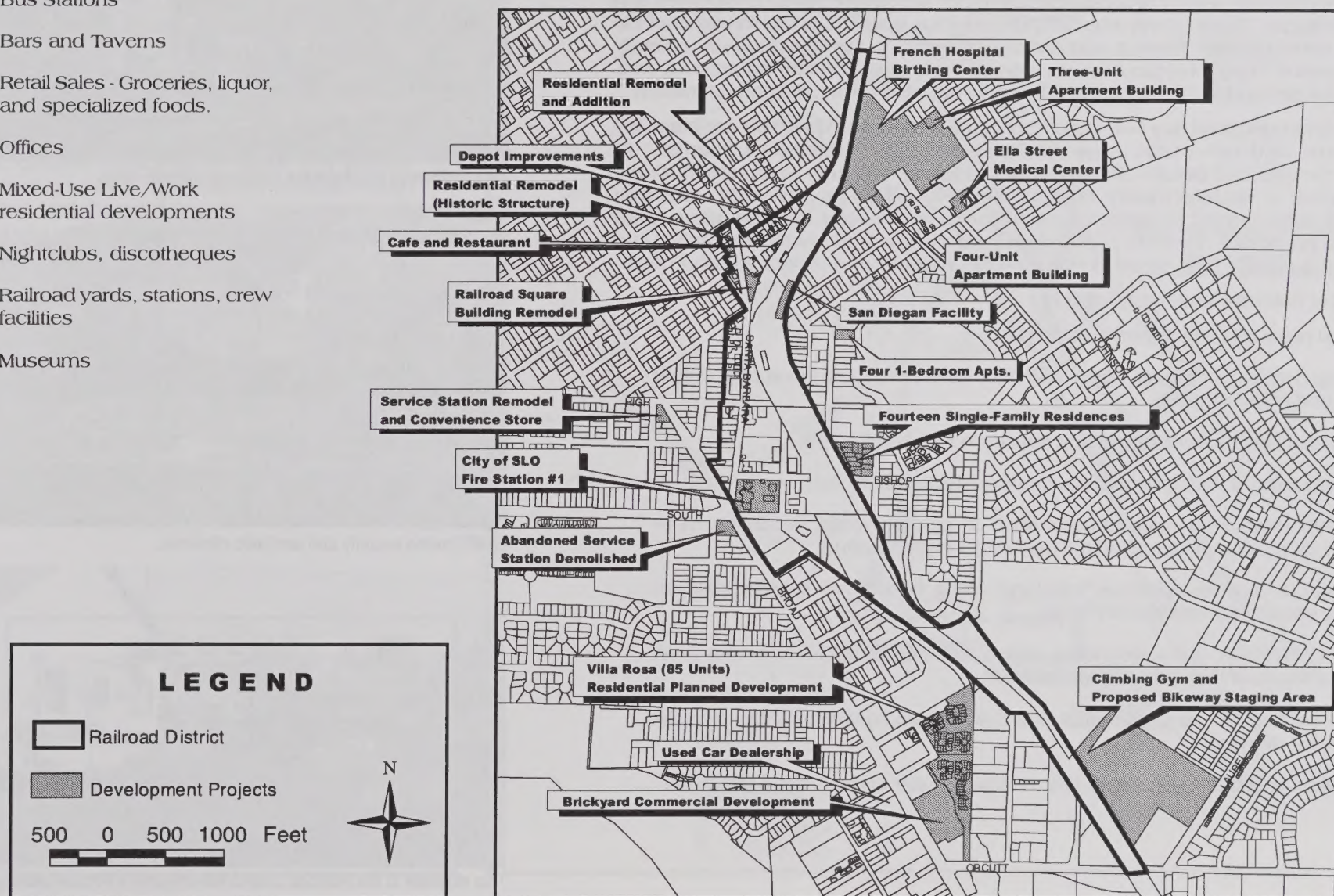
New residential development adjacent to the Railroad District.



New commercial development near the Railroad District.

- Bed and Breakfast Inns, Hostels
- Bus Stations
- Bars and Taverns
- Retail Sales - Groceries, liquor, and specialized foods.
- Offices
- Mixed-Use Live/Work residential developments
- Nightclubs, discotheques
- Railroad yards, stations, crew facilities
- Museums

Figure 10: Recent/Anticipated Development



land use

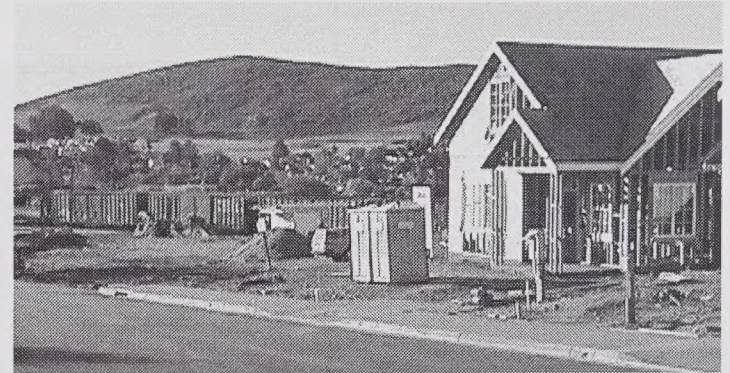
Land Use Issues

Given the District's diversity, there is a potential for land use conflicts. With such a broad range of uses, conflicts can arise from different user needs, changing land uses and new development. Efforts to maintain and improve compatibility should continue through the City development review process and day-to-day actions by District businesses and property owners. These efforts must also consider the operational requirements of the railroad in terms of noise, loading, and parking. In essence, the City's land use strategy should continue to reinforce the District's unique characteristics, allow for gradual, well-planned change, and avoid actions which would adversely affect railroad operations.

The recommended land use policies and programs starting on page 66 are intended to minimize land use conflicts as the Railroad District undergoes change. In addition, the Railroad District Architectural Guidelines will help to ensure that new development is architecturally compatible with adjacent buildings, and that designers incorporate appropriate measures to prevent lighting glare onto residential properties, provide appropriate landscaping and visual screening, and consider the effects their projects will have on neighboring properties and uses.

Examples of potential land use conflicts:

- railroad noise affecting adjacent residential uses;
- parking demand for transit, office, and retail uses exceeding the supply during peak and off-peak times;
- residential neighbors using parking spaces in Railroad Square;
- frequent railroad track crossings by pedestrians and bicyclists;
- unsightly service-commercial uses, such as storage yards, becoming more visible as residential uses and rail passenger traffic expand;
- transient or homeless persons "camping" along the railroad, causing litter, fire safety, security and health concerns;
- traffic congestion on surrounding streets and in parking areas when peak activity levels of the various uses coincide;
- safety lighting for rail passengers and San Diegan maintenance operations disturbing neighbors;
- increased graffiti and vandalism which raise security and aesthetic concerns.



New residential development subject to railroad noise.



Graffiti raises security and aesthetic concerns.

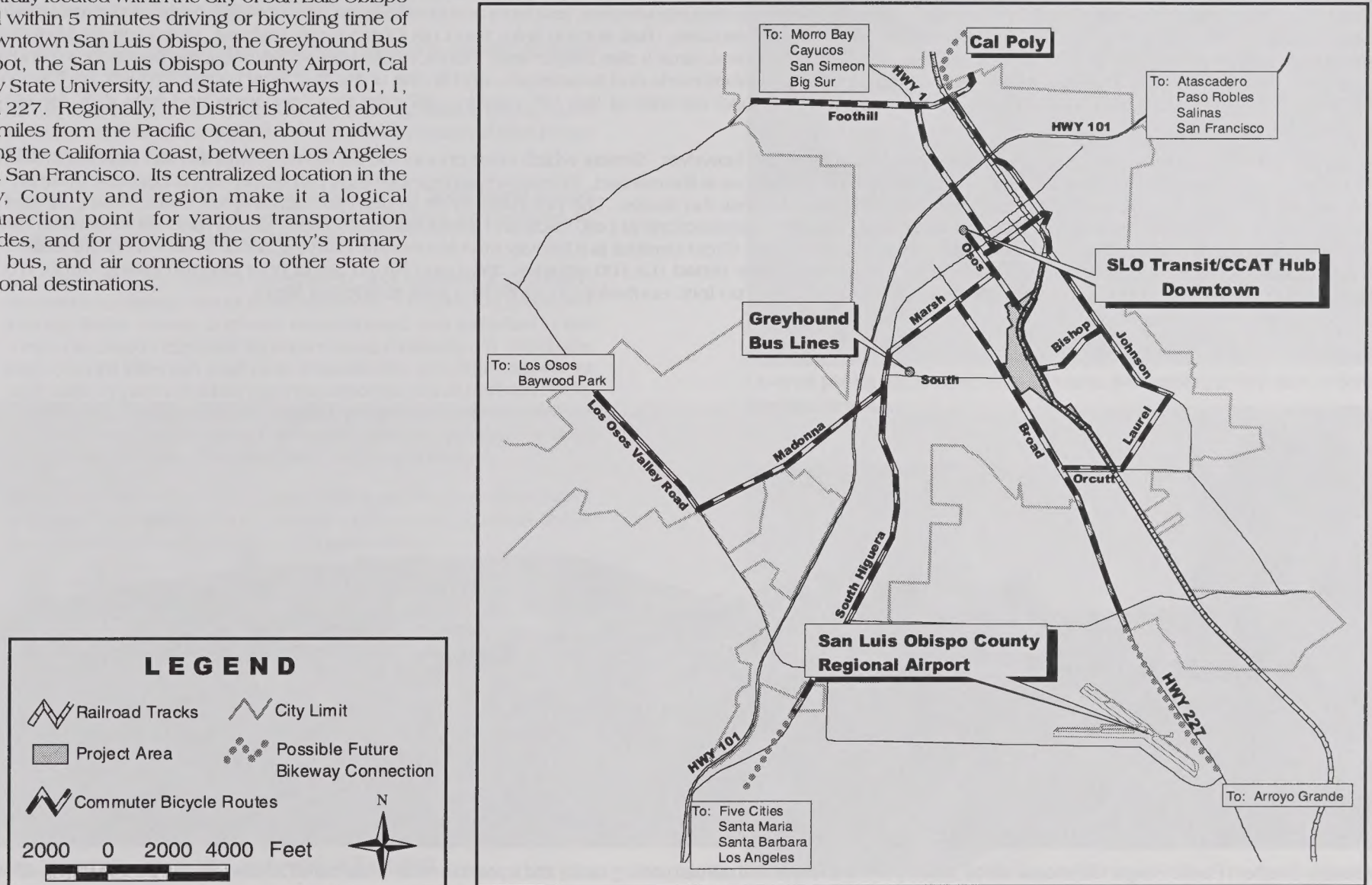


This sidewalk in the Railroad District has become a popular parking lot due to limited off-street parking.

Regional Transportation Context

As shown in Figure 11, the Railroad District is centrally located within the City of San Luis Obispo and within 5 minutes driving or bicycling time of Downtown San Luis Obispo, the Greyhound Bus Depot, the San Luis Obispo County Airport, Cal Poly State University, and State Highways 101, 1, and 227. Regionally, the District is located about 12 miles from the Pacific Ocean, about midway along the California Coast, between Los Angeles and San Francisco. Its centralized location in the City, County and region make it a logical connection point for various transportation modes, and for providing the county's primary rail, bus, and air connections to other state or national destinations.

Figure 11: Regional Transportation



transportation and circulation

Transportation and Circulation Background

The Railroad District has been the City's transportation hub since the 1870s when the Pacific Coast Railway was built. It is the only place in San Luis Obispo where several transportation modes conveniently meet: walking, bicycling, automobile trips, bus, and rail services. Its central location makes the District a logical choice for expanded public transit facilities and parking to serve Amtrak passengers, residents and businesses. The possible multi-modal transit transfer center will initially provide public parking and eventually, public transit facilities. Rail service links San Luis Obispo with regional, statewide and out-of-state destinations; and provides daily service to Los Angeles and San Diego via Amtrak's *San Diegan* line. For bicyclists and pedestrians, the railroad yard and right-of-way provide a convenient, local route between schools, parks, neighborhoods and businesses, and is one of the few level routes through the City. Wood boardwalks, a common sight in many towns and railroad areas around the turn of the 19th century, still exist in a few areas and help give the area its recognizable character.

The District's central location is both an advantage and a disadvantage, however. Streets which once connected Downtown with the Ella Street and Johnson Avenue neighborhoods have been abandoned or closed to through access at the railroad. Crosstown automobile trips can be circuitous because there are only three streets, Johnson, Orcutt, and California/San Luis Drive, which cross the tracks. The pre-1900 street system surrounding the District has changed little since the railroad was built. An angled street grid creates nonstandard intersections at Leff, Osos and Santa Barbara Streets; Church and Santa Barbara Streets; and Upham and Santa Barbara Streets. The 2-lane Osos/Santa Barbara Street corridor is a heavily traveled arterial, carrying about 16,000 vehicles daily. This is a higher traffic volume than other nearby arterials, South Street near Broad (12,100 vehicles daily) and Broad Street near Buchon at Slay Street (10,200 vehicles daily). Osos/Santa Barbara Street ranges in width from 50 to 60 feet, equivalent in width to a local residential street.



The historic Southern Pacific Freight Warehouse will be a focal point of an expanded railroad parking facility and a possible multi-modal transit transfer center. View looking south with the South Street Hills in the background.

transportation and circulation

Past changes to the area's circulation also affect existing conditions and traffic patterns. Key actions or past changes include:

- A bridge that used to cross the railroad linking Penny Lane with Fairview Avenue was removed in the 1950s.
- In the 1950s the City relinquished rights for surface vehicle crossings of the railroad at Osos Street.
- In the mid-1970s, Cal Trans widened Broad Street (Route 227) from two to four lanes (including a center turn lane and bike lanes) between Tank Farm Road and High Street.
- During the 1970s, the City abandoned plan lines along Broad Street (from Pismo Street south to High Street) in response to neighborhood preservation interests.
- In 1982, the City Council considered and rejected a proposed extension of Bishop Street to Broad Street. In 1994, the proposed Bishop Street connection was reconsidered and included in the 1994 Circulation Element as a proposed roadway. In 1996, the City Council directed staff to re-evaluate the possible alignment and traffic impacts of a Bishop/Roundhouse/Santa Barbara Street connection, leading to the Council's preferred alignment shown in Figure 18. Further review of traffic impacts and costs will be needed to determine the feasibility of the connection.
- In the mid-1980s, the City modified the Osos/Santa Barbara Street intersection to provide a continuous connection between these two streets and create a new "T" intersection.
- Traffic studies in the early 1990s showed that buildout of the General Plan will increase traffic congestion on Osos/Santa Barbara Street. However, widening of this corridor was not included in the 1994 Circulation Element primarily due to impacts on fronting land uses, neighborhoods, and high costs.
- In 1993, in response to a City request, Caltrans rerouted Highway 227 using the South Street, Higuera Street, and Madonna Road alignment to avoid conflicts Downtown with Thursday night *Farmers' Market* activities.
- In 1993, the City installed bicycle lanes on both sides of Santa Barbara Street from Broad to Leff Street, necessitating the removal of curb parking along the east side of the street.
- In 1998, safe bicycle and pedestrian passage across the railroad tracks was provided with completion of the Jennifer Street Bridge.



On-street parking was removed when bike lanes were installed on both sides of Santa Barbara Street.



Construction of the Jennifer Street Bridge was completed in 1998, providing a safe route across the tracks for pedestrians.

transportation and circulation

Railroad District Streets

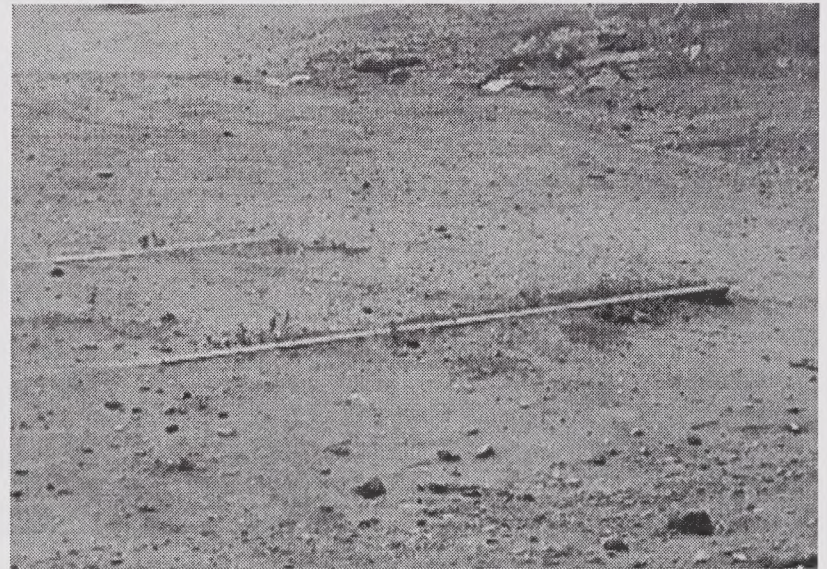
In the 1980s, plans for widening Broad Street north of High St. (then State Highway 227) were abandoned primarily due to neighborhood preservation issues in the Old Town Historic District. As traffic volumes increased, the Osos/Santa Barbara Street corridor became a parallel north-south cross-town connector, joining the South Broad Street and Airport area with the Downtown, Civic Center and State Highway 101. A second arterial, Santa Rosa Street, provides access to the Railroad District from Downtown and State Highway 101. Chorro, Morro, Leff, Church, and High Streets also provide direct access to the District; however these are primarily residential in character and traffic volumes are relatively light. Because the District's circulation relies largely on local streets and one arterial street – Osos/Santa Barbara Street — to meet circulation needs, traffic congestion and pedestrian/bicyclist street crossings can pose special difficulties. Osos/Santa Barbara Streets were designated by CalTrans as "Alternate Truck Routes" in conjunction with changed plans for Broad Street and are shown as truck routes in the Circulation Element.

High, Roundhouse and Emily streets provide access from Santa Barbara Street to the railroad right-of-way and to several warehouses and storage yards. Emily Street, although only partially improved, has been used for public and employee parking for adjacent businesses and remains a public right-of-way. Curb, gutter and sidewalk on High and Emily streets are in poor condition, and street lighting placement does not meet the City standard for spacing. These streets are important because:

- 1) they provide secondary access to properties fronting onto Santa Barbara Street;
- 2) they provide direct access to the railroad right-of-way;
- 3) Emily Street provides primary vehicle access to two parcels along the railroad;
- 4) Roundhouse Avenue may serve as a future connector to the Bishop Street Railroad Crossing; and
- 5) The existing spur track in Emily Street could be repaired to allow freight loading or display of railroad equipment and/or rolling stock.



The site of a potential Bishop Street-Roundhouse cross-town connection.



This spur track in Emily Street may be restored and used for a historic railroad car display as recommended by this plan (see page 53 #12).

Santa Barbara/Osos Street Corridor

A 1979 Traffic Circulation study identified the Santa Barbara Street Corridor as a problem area due to projected traffic congestion. It evaluated several design and operational changes which would improve traffic flows and capacity in this area, including: 1) a Downtown bypass which would extend Santa Barbara Street to connect with Santa Rosa Street through the Railroad Square area; 2) improvements to the Santa Barbara-South-Broad Street intersection; 3) closure of Broad Street northwest of South Street in concert with a possible Santa Barbara Street bypass; and 4) a one-way pair, Morro Street and Osos Street, to increase street capacity in lieu of the Santa Barbara Street extension. Ultimately, the City Council decided not to pursue the Santa Barbara Street extension and Broad Street closure, and subsequent changes in the railroad area have precluded the Santa Barbara Street bypass option. Intersection improvements have been made at the Santa Barbara-South-Broad Street intersection, as well as minor improvements at the intersection of Osos and Santa Barbara Streets to improve traffic flow and safety.

The City's Circulation Element (1994) sets priorities for various transportation activities, including street improvements, traffic calming, alternative transportation, and locations and designs of new streets. It seeks to balance transportation objectives, giving equal weight to both conventional and alternative transportation modes and improvements. It identifies Osos and Santa Barbara streets as arterial streets, and discourages the use of local streets for through traffic. It also identifies this corridor as a truck route, connecting with State Highways 227, 101 and 1. A traffic study prepared in connection with the multi-modal transit transfer center for the Osos/Santa Barbara Street corridor recommended several street improvements, including a traffic signal at Upham or High Street.



View looking north on Santa Barbara Street. At right, the proposed site of the expanded railroad parking facility.

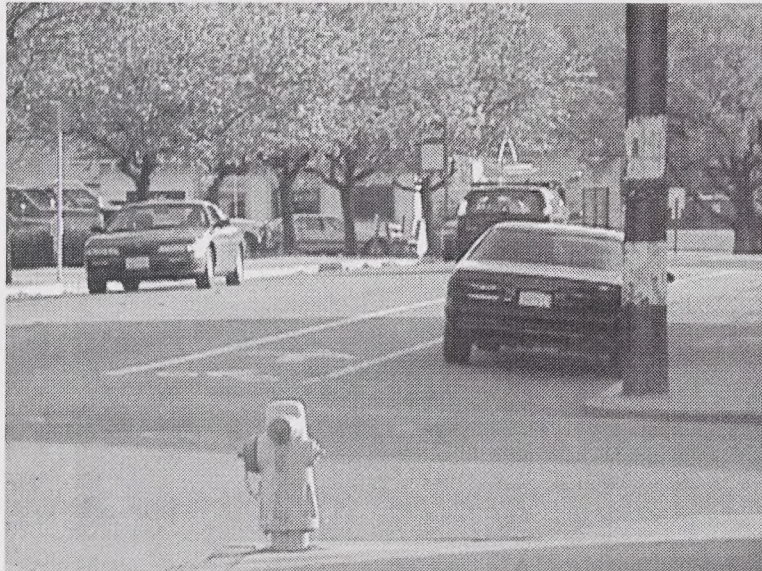


View looking west at the Park Hotel, where Osos Street terminates at Railroad Square.

Issues summary



Changing land use patterns leave vacant or under-utilized buildings and land.



Santa Barbara Street has become a key transportation artery for buses, cars and bikes.

Land Use Issues

- The Railroad District has historically been a mix of residential, commercial and industrial land uses within a relatively small geographic area. Given this mix, there is a potential for land use conflicts. That potential has increased as new commercial, residential and public transportation development projects are built.
- General Plan policies support mixed-uses and encourage measures to minimize land use conflicts. Potential conflicts within the District are related to: railroad noise; parking demand; access limitations and established bike/pedestrian routes; unsightly or noisy land uses; transient or homeless person camps; traffic congestion; site lighting; vandalism and graffiti.
- As railroad freight traffic declined, some warehouse/industrial uses changed or went out of business, leaving vacant or under-utilized buildings.
- Development activity suggests that uses will gradually change, favoring office, retail, and tourist-commercial uses over service-commercial and light industrial uses.

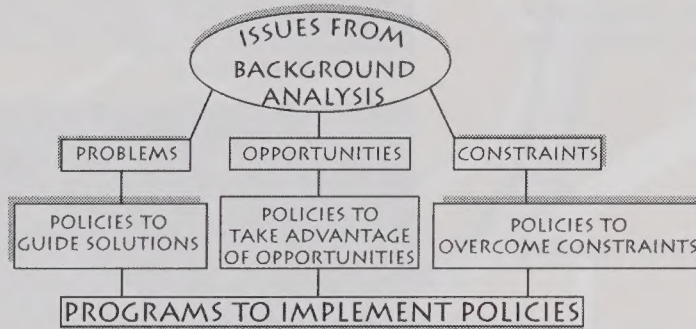
Transportation and Circulation Issues

- Because of citywide circulation changes and city and regional growth, traffic volumes and congestion along the Osos/Santa Barbara Street corridor have increased. This increase has affected pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.
- Parking demand in the Railroad Square area exceeds supply and additional public parking is needed to serve Amtrak passengers and other businesses.
- Because of the area's past industrial and railroad uses, some public streets were not fully improved; and some improvements no longer meet city standards. Frontage improvements, street trees and street lighting are needed along Santa Barbara, High, Roundhouse and Emily Streets.
- The railroad tracks divide the City's neighborhoods, making it difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to get from the Johnson/Ella/Flora/Bishop Street residential neighborhoods to Downtown and other areas west of the tracks.
- Passenger rail traffic and tour buses have increased, resulting in the need for additional passenger loading areas and services.

Opportunities and Constraints

A key step in the planning process was to analyze the planning opportunities and constraints. This involved photo-surveying the District; assembling and analyzing base information, maps and other city documents; identifying specific problems and opportunities for correcting problems or improving conditions; and identifying constraints to achieving the District's goals.

Figure 13: How the Opportunities and Constraints Analysis Leads to Policies and Programs



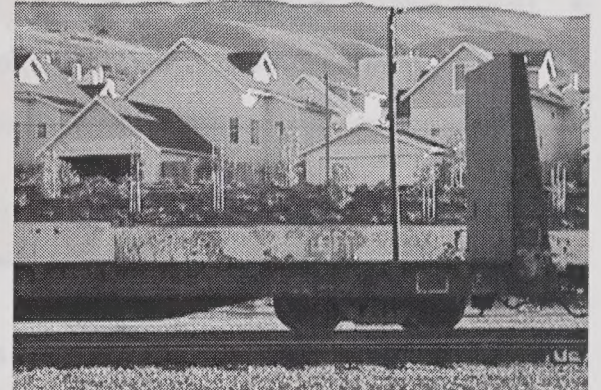
Problem Identification

District problems were identified through the public comments, City Council direction, site reconnaissance, City documents, and adopted City standards and/or policies. Problems identified include:

- Pedestrians and bicyclists have difficulty crossing Santa Barbara Street;
- Trash, graffiti and junk in the railroad right-of-way;
- Deteriorating, vacant, or nonconforming buildings, including some designated historic structures;
- Homeless camps in the right-of-way;
- Lack of public parking;
- New development which does not reflect the District's historic architectural character; and
- Lack of regular maintenance of railroad right-of-way.
- Vacant or underutilized land.



The linearity and openness of the District allow views of the scenic Cuesta Pass, the Morros and the South Street Hills.



Graffiti is a problem in the District.



Trash accumulates under this tree in the railroad right-of-way.

opportunities and constraints

Opportunities

- Availability of excess railroad right-of-way for a north-south bikeway, parking, and other public facilities;
- Vacant or underused railroad buildings provide an opportunity for re-use and rehabilitation;
- Expanded rail/transit/parking facilities;
- Possible pedestrian/bikeway connections to open space, residential, and commercial areas;
- The City's ability to coordinate public improvements, including the Jennifer St. Bridge, new bikeway and an expanded railroad parking facility provides opportunities to beautify the area.
- Historic railroad structures;
- Views of Terrace Hill, South Street Hills, Cerro San Luis and Bishop Peak;
- Underused street and railroad frontage adjacent to Santa Barbara Street between High and South Streets;
- City-owned open space, parks, and public bikeway and trail easements located near the railroad right-of-way.

Constraints

- Possible soil contamination, particularly in the Roundhouse, Turntable, and central yard areas;
- Acquisition cost of excess railroad right-of-way;
- Security, safety and access requirements of Union Pacific Railroad;
- Security concerns of neighboring residents and businesses;
- Poor street circulation/high traffic volumes;
- Noise and lighting sensitivity for adjacent residential neighborhoods;
- Right-of-way limitation on Osos/Santa Barbara Streets.

Figure 14 shows the locations of planning opportunities and constraints. These are important because they become the basis for proposed changes or improvements in the plan and become the focus of community efforts to improve the Railroad District.



Emily Street right-of-way.



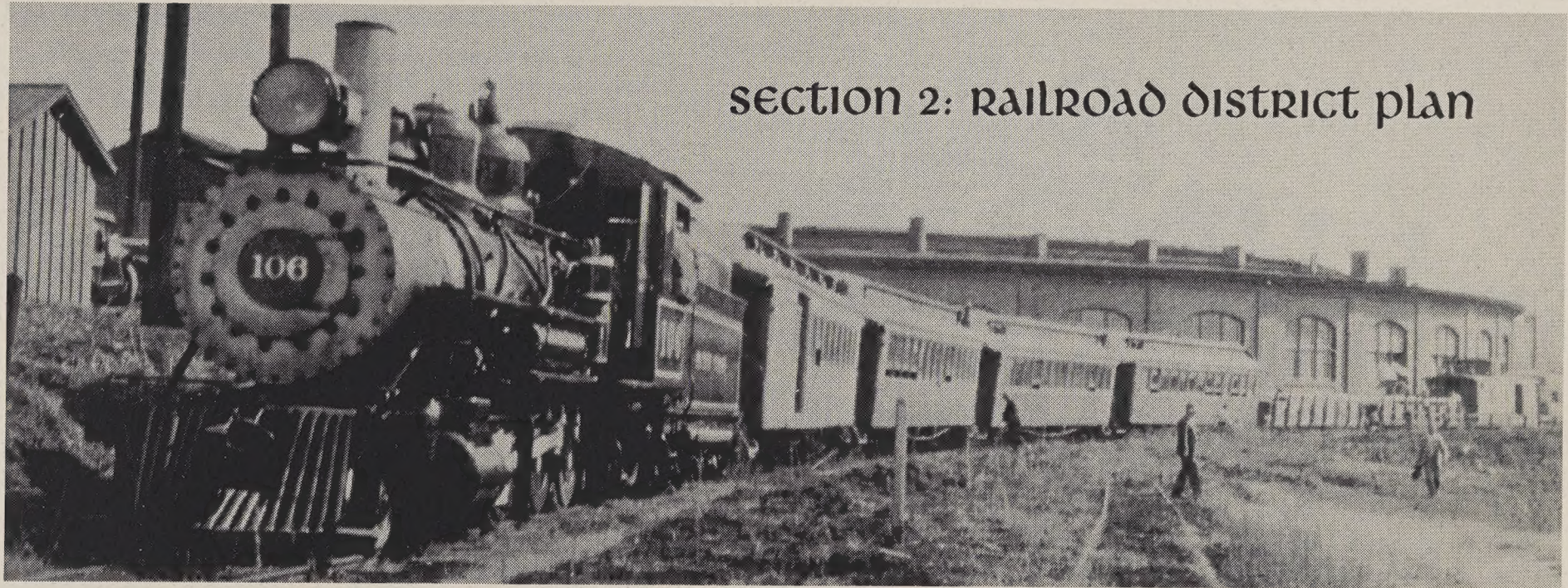
Soil contamination is evident in the District.



Improving access to Sinsheimer Park is a planning challenge.

Figure 14: Opportunities and Constraints



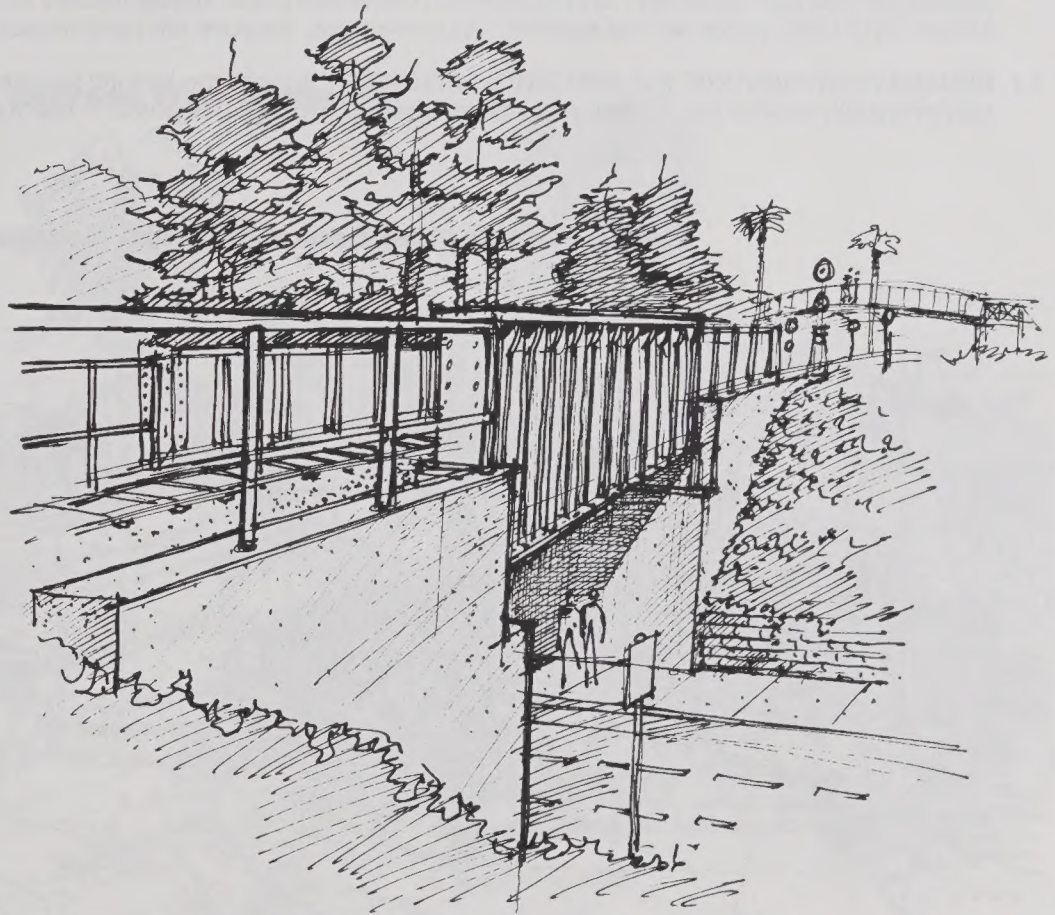


Railroad District Plan

The Railroad District Plan is based upon the issues, opportunities and constraints discussed in the previous section. For clarity, the Plan is divided into three area maps shown on the following pages. Area 1 (Figure 17) covers the north one-third of the planning area, Area 2 (Figure 18) covers the central portion, and Area 3 (Figure 19) covers the southern portion. The Plan shows physical improvements planned or recommended in public areas and in the railroad right-of-way. It also shows District boundaries and areas of special consideration or possible land use changes. The alignments of bicycle and pedestrian paths shown on the maps are not precise. They may be modified if necessary to address specific site opportunities and constraints. However, the bicycle and pedestrian circulation system illustrated on the maps and the location of access points should be maintained. The Railroad District Plan Actions below are consistent with and carry out the intent of the General Plan. The number of each action corresponds with the numbered labels on Figures 17, 18 and 19.

1.0 Railroad District Plan Actions

1. **BIKEWAY ACCESS RAMP** - Construct a bikeway on city-owned land adjacent to Johnson Avenue to provide access for southbound bicyclists onto the railroad bikeway.
2. **FUTURE BIKEWAY CROSSING** - Install a bridge over Johnson Avenue to allow future extension of the railroad bikeway north to Cal Poly University.
3. **PENNY LANE BRIDGE** - Install a pedestrian bridge over the railroad right-of-way linking Fairview Street with Penny Lane to allow a north-south crossing linking neighborhood commercial uses at Marsh Street and Johnson Avenue and in the Mill Street area, with the Johnson Avenue and Ella Street neighborhoods.
4. **FUTURE PEDESTRIAN TRAIL/BIKEWAY TO LIZZIE STREET** - As part of the approved campus master plan for French Hospital, install a bikeway and trail linking the railroad bikeway on the east side of the railroad tracks to the traffic signal on Johnson Avenue at Lizzie Street.
5. **NEW BIKEWAY** - Install new bikeways along both sides of the railroad right-of-way where possible, with minimum dimensions of 8 ft. wide for the paved bikeway plus 2 ft. wide shoulders, including directional/safety striping, lighting and landscaping.
6. **REHABILITATE HISTORIC WATER TOWER** - Complete the architectural restoration of the historic water tower to its 1940s condition and update the historic marker located in the depot area describing the tower's purpose and significance.

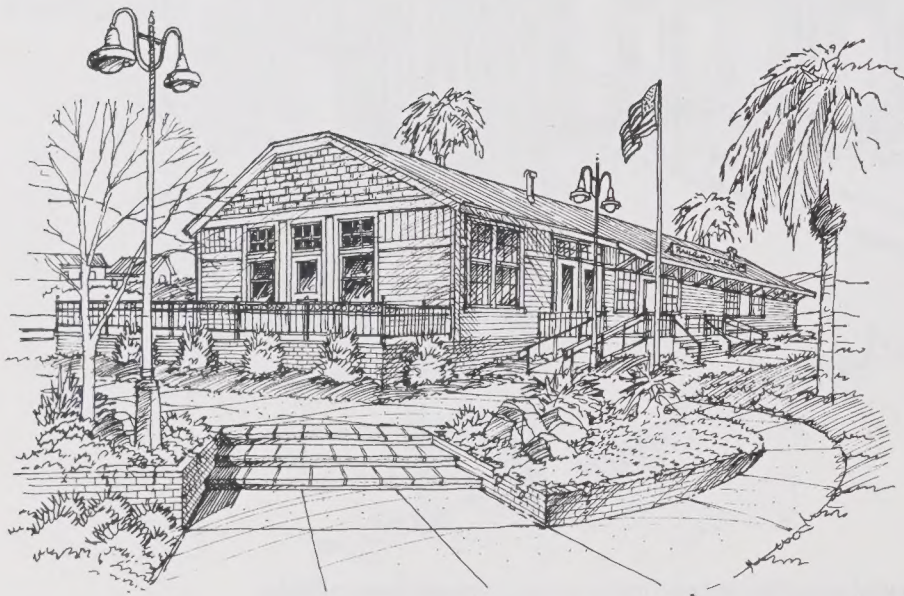


Looking southwest along the railroad tracks at the Johnson Avenue Bridge

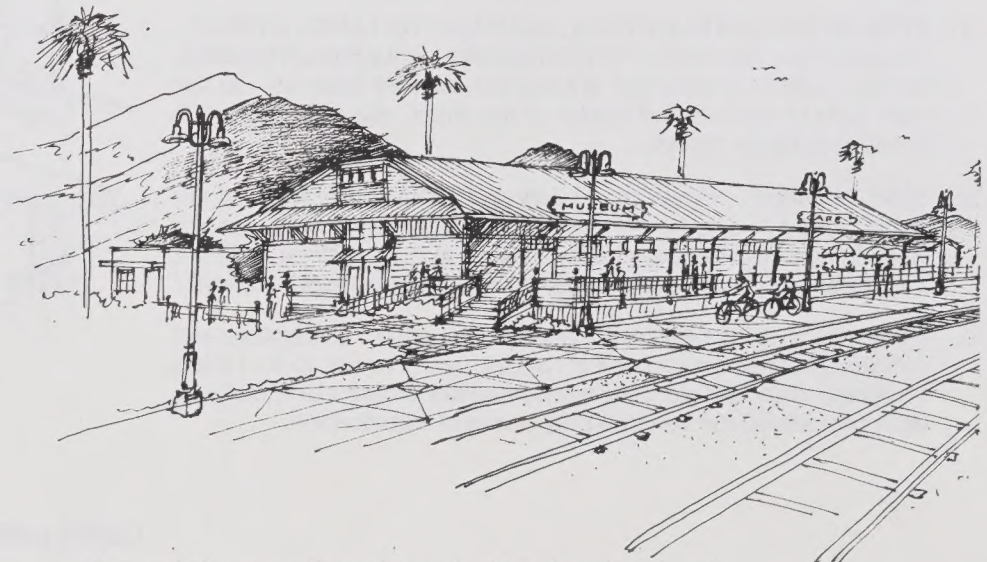
Railroad District plan

7. **EXPANDED PASSENGER LOADING ZONE** - Install an expanded passenger loading zone in the parking lot north of the railroad depot to allow passengers to disembark from buses and cars and to unload luggage without blocking traffic on Railroad Avenue or Santa Rosa Street. As an alternate location, provide a turn out along the north side of Railroad Avenue opposite the Railroad Depot for an automobile passenger loading zone.
8. **LEFF AND OSOS STREET IMPROVEMENTS** - Install new textured concrete paving and crosswalks, pedestrian-scale street lighting, additional street trees and signage to improve pedestrian access and appearance at Leff and Osos Streets,
9. **CORRIDOR PALM TREE PLANTING** - Plant Palm Trees (*Phoenix Canariensis*) on 500 - 1000 ft. centers to expand the historic Southern Pacific Railroad theme planting as gateway enhancement to the City.
10. **MULTI-MODAL TRANSIT TRANSFER CENTER** - Acquire the necessary land and construct a multi-modal transit transfer center to provide additional parking for railroad passengers and to provide convenient public transit transfer facilities, including shelter, restrooms, information, bike storage and lockers, and other visitor-serving facilities. As interim use, improve the multi-modal center site with additional parking for Amtrak passengers.
11. **REHABILITATE HISTORIC S.P. FREIGHT WAREHOUSE** - Acquire the historic Southern Pacific Freight Warehouse and take steps to preserve, stabilize and eventually restore the structure for adaptive reuse, including its possible use for railroad displays or as a railroad museum.

Figure 15: Adaptive Reuse Concept: Southern Pacific Freight Warehouse



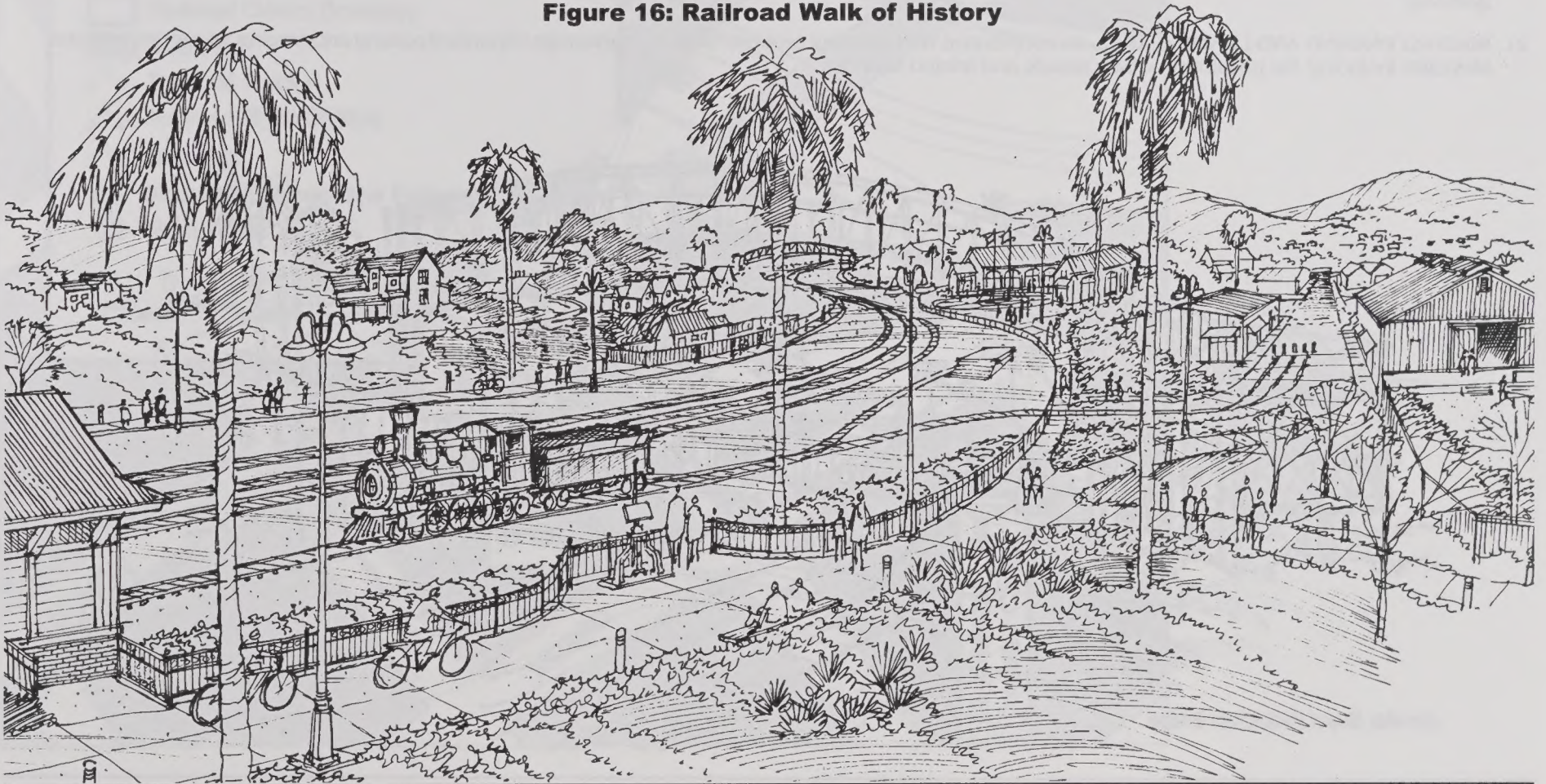
Railroad Museum, Santa Barbara Street entrance.



Railroad Museum with outdoor cafe, from the railroad tracks.

12. **HISTORIC RAILROAD CAR DISPLAY** - Install standard gauge railroad track in the vicinity of the historic Freight Warehouse and in Emily Street to allow the permanent display of historic railroad cars, engines and other rolling stock.
13. **RAILROAD DISTRICT STREET IMPROVEMENTS** - Install street paving, curb, gutter and wood sidewalk; street trees, street lighting, and signage to meet City standards on, Railroad Avenue, Osos, Santa Barbara, High, Emily and Roundhouse Streets, and install historic district signs at major street and railroad entries.
14. **HISTORIC RAILROAD YARD WALK OF HISTORY** - Install historic markers and improved Walk of History describing the Roundhouse, Turntable, and other important railroad features.
15. **ALTERNATE RAILROAD BIKEWAY ACCESS** - Install bikeway in the area between Alphonso and Emily Streets linking commercial redevelopment with the railroad walk of history and bikeway.

Figure 16: Railroad Walk of History



railroad district plan

16. LAWRENCE DRIVE BRIDGE - Acquire right-of-way and install a pedestrian/bicycle crossing to allow access from the Stoneridge/Lawrence Drive/Villa Rosa neighborhoods to Sinsheimer Park.
17. VILLA ROSA BIKEWAY/TRAIL - Ensure that public access to the railroad bikeway is provided with completion of the Villa Rosa Planned Residential Development.
18. RAILROAD DRAINAGE CULVERT/TEMPORARY UNDERCROSSING - Work with Union Pacific Railroad to improve bicycle/pedestrian access to the railroad culvert as an interim undercrossing to Sinsheimer Park.
19. SINSHEIMER PARK TRAIL/BIKEWAY - Install new bikeway linking the railroad bikeway with the Augusta Street/Southwood Drive neighborhood, through creek and park areas.
20. GATEWAY RENOVATION AREA - Work with property owners along both sides of the railroad right-of-way to replace/repair unsightly fencing, remove trash and junk vehicles, screen outdoor storage and parking, and install landscaping along the fence line to improve the appearance of the City's gateway.
21. BIKEWAY PARKING AND LOADING AREA - In cooperation with adjacent property owners, encourage expanded parking and staging area for recreational bicyclists including the possibility of bike rentals and related services.



Jennifer Street Pedestrian Bridge.

Figure 17: Railroad District Plan - Area 1

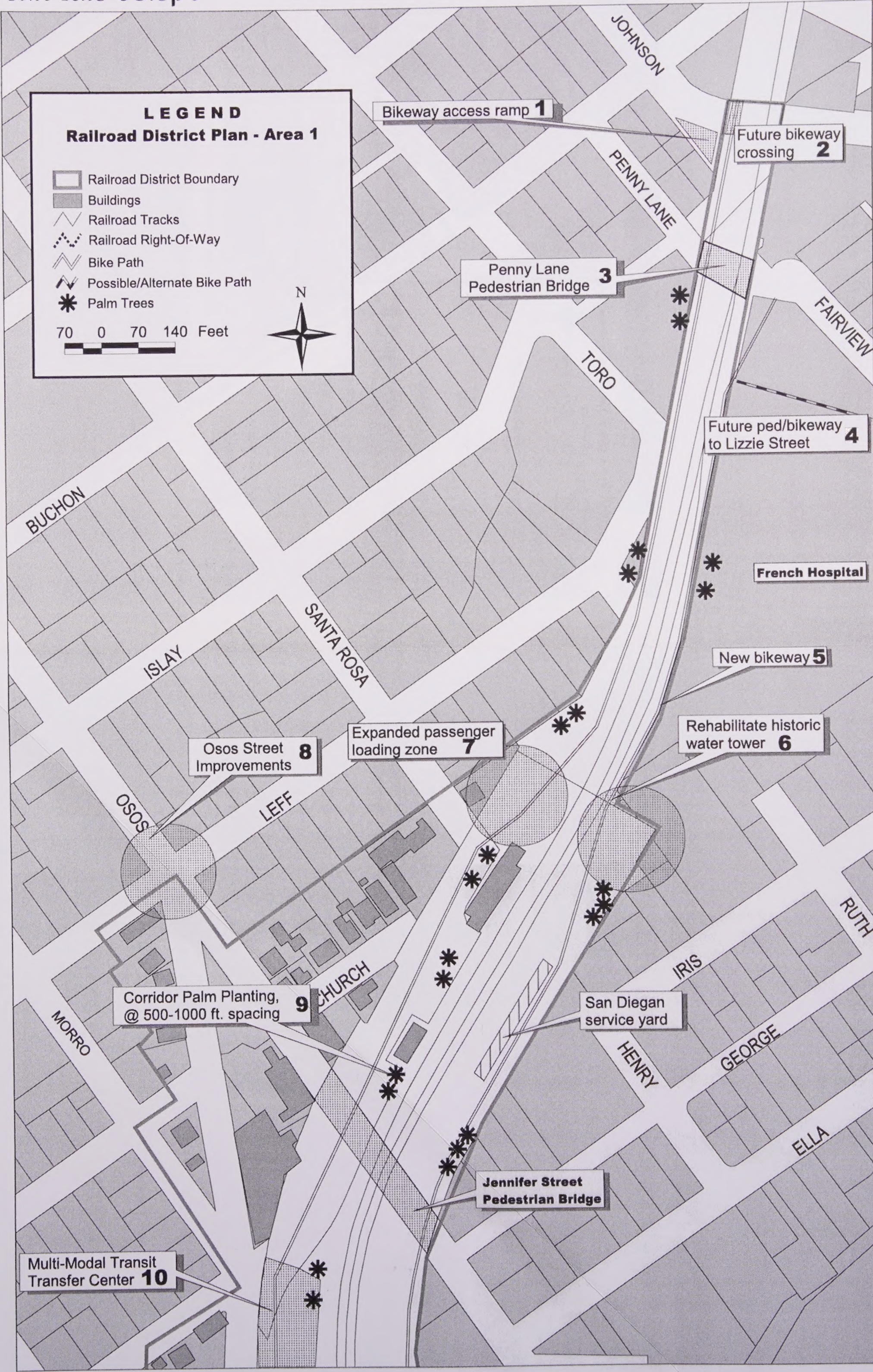


Figure 18: Railroad District Plan - Area 2

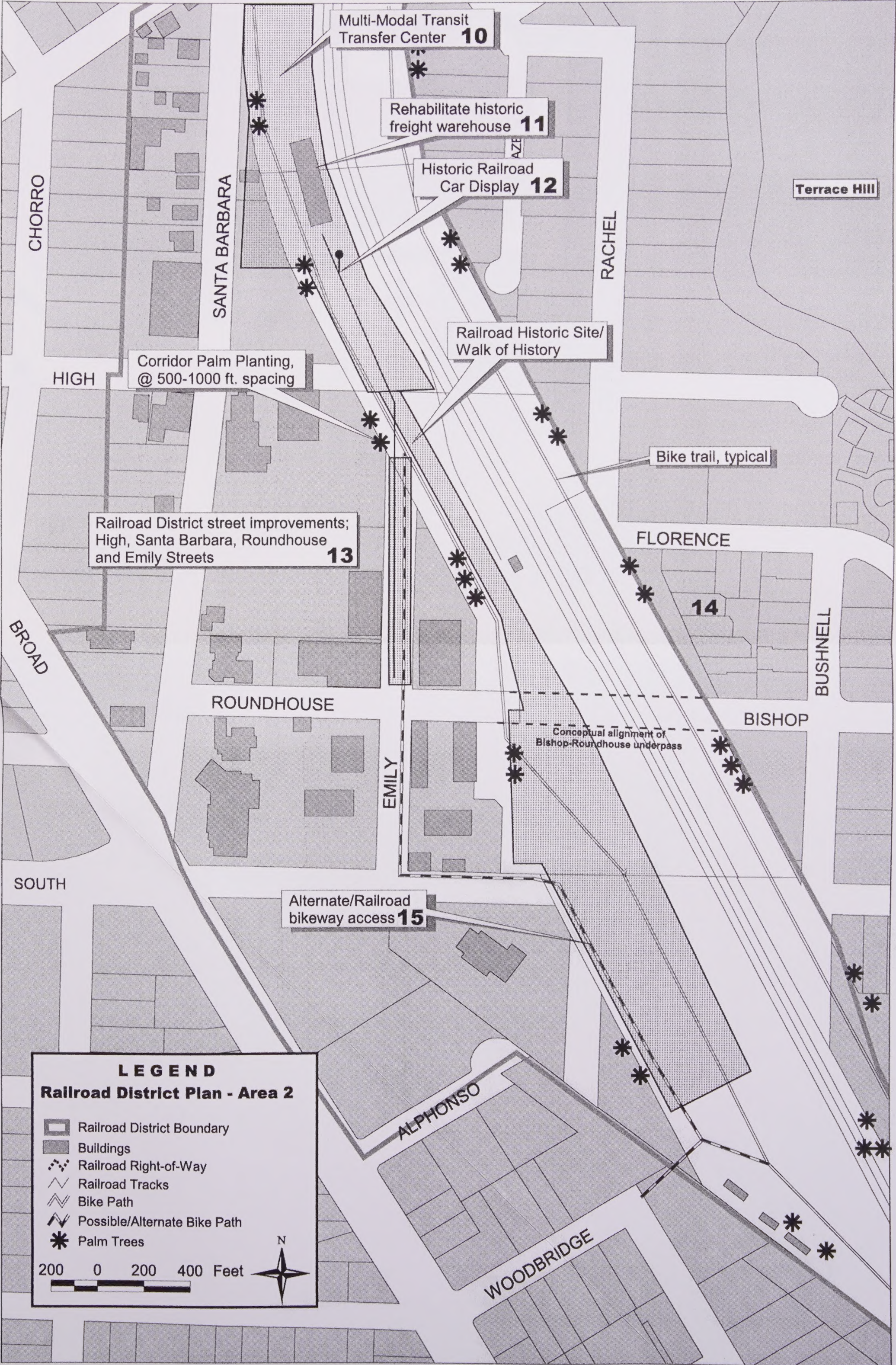
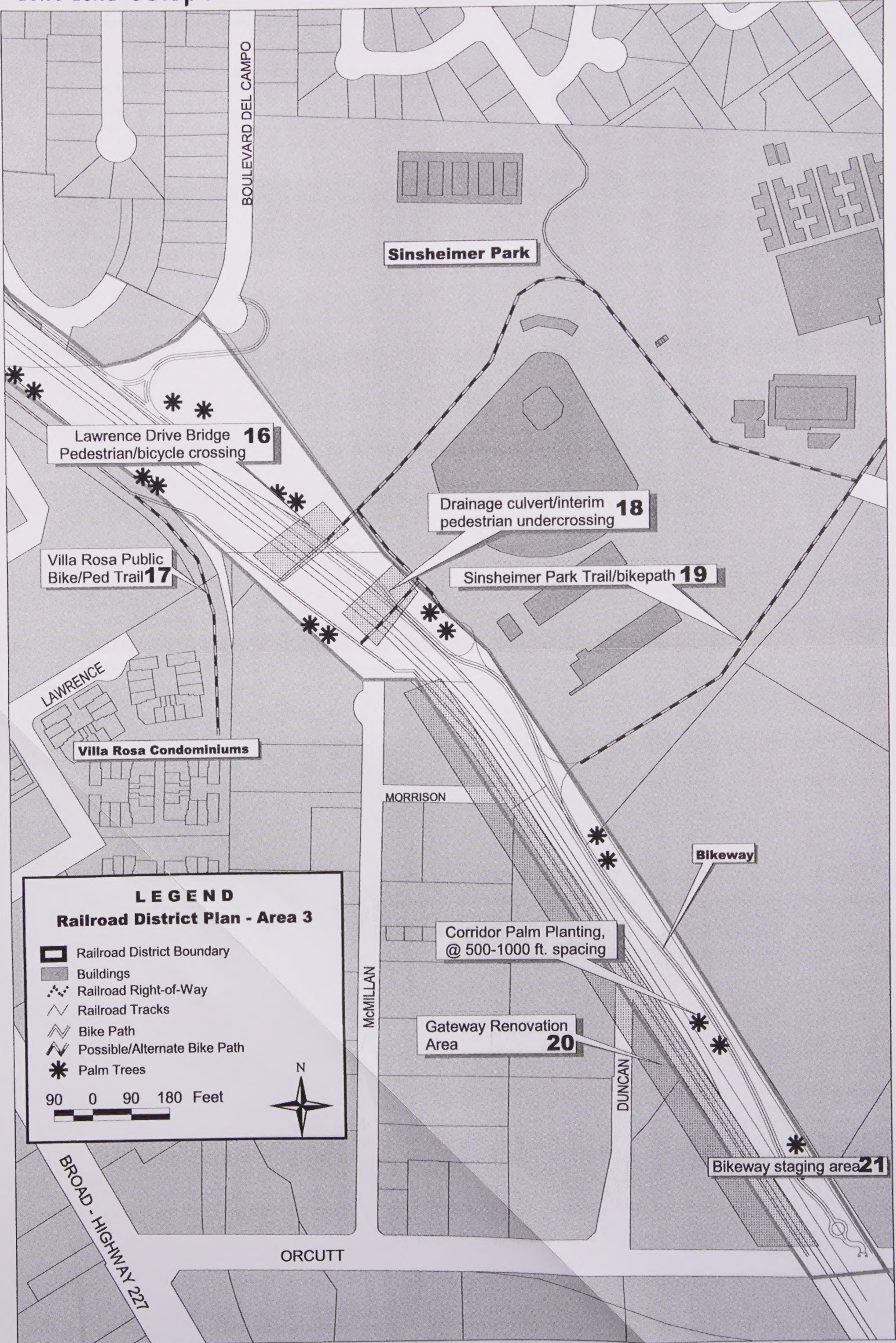


Figure 19: Railroad District Plan - Area 3



historic preservation policies and programs

2.0 Historic Preservation Policies and Programs

2.1 ESTABLISH A NEW RAILROAD HISTORIC DISTRICT.

PROGRAMS

- A. The City will establish a new Railroad Historic District that reflects the full extent of the historic railroad yard and remaining historic resources.
- B. The Cultural Heritage Committee will inventory historic features within the District, and where appropriate, add them to the Master List of Historic Resources.
- C. The City will make historic plaques available to owners of listed historic properties.

2.2 PROTECT HISTORIC RESOURCES.

POLICIES

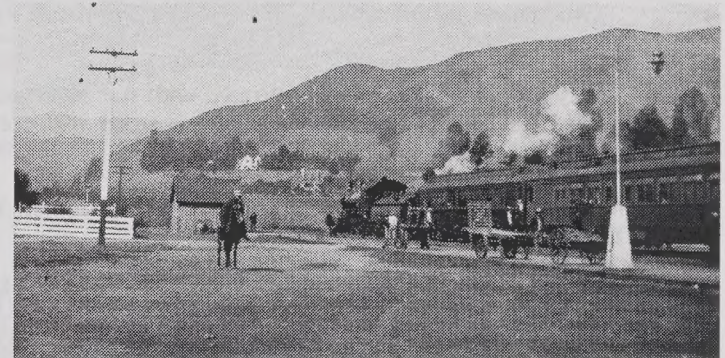
- A. The City should use education, code enforcement and incentives to protect historic resources.
- B. The City will actively enforce construction, property maintenance and other health and safety codes in the District and seek cooperation from the railroad, County and State agencies and private property owners as necessary.

PROGRAMS

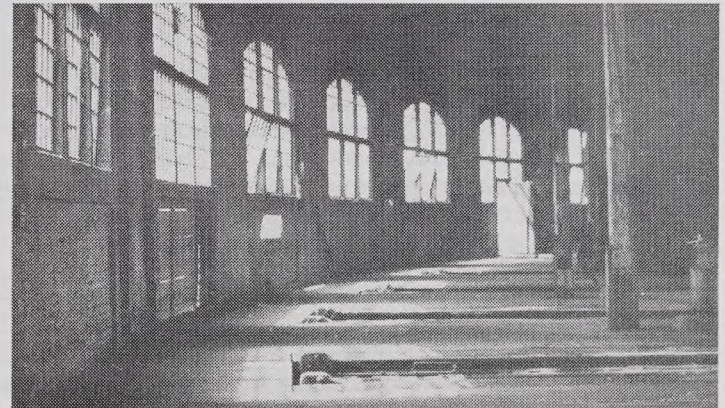
- C. The City will publish a public information pamphlet on the Railroad District, summarizing the District's background, role and importance, property maintenance standards, and development rules. This information should be sent to District property owners and tenants and be made available to the public.
- D. The City will establish a building rehabilitation loan program using grant funds to promote cleanup, repairs, restoration and code corrections.
- E. The City will work cooperatively with Amtrak and Union Pacific to promote San Luis Obispo and the historic Railroad District by providing brochures, photos, web site information, and other aids to enhance travel promotions and visitor enjoyment.



San Luis Obispo Depot in 1936.



Railroad scene, 1910.



The Roundhouse's large divided windows provided natural lighting for mechanics and engineers

historic preservation policies and programs

2.3 INTEGRATE HISTORIC FEATURES INTO NEW DEVELOPMENT.

POLICIES

- A. New development in the Railroad District should be designed to preserve historic resources and to integrate them with the proposed site and building improvements.
- B. As the Railroad District changes and new uses are proposed, the City should: 1) encourage uses which are compatible with and complementary to the Railroad and other transit uses; 2) avoid removing or damaging historic resources and their historic settings; and 3) retain the architectural character of the Railroad District.
- C. The City will apply the Railroad District Plan and Architectural Guidelines when reviewing new development in the Railroad District.
- D. City-funded projects will comply with the Railroad District Plan and will be designed to preserve, restore and enhance historic railroad features.

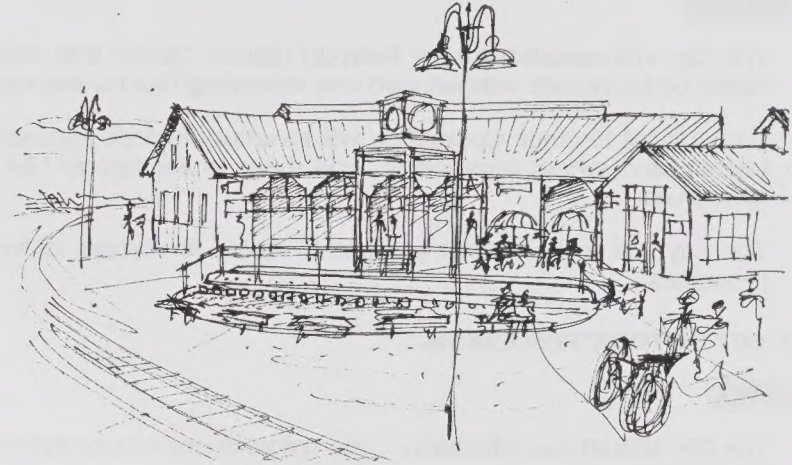
2.4 MAKE HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE, VISIBLE OR BOTH.

POLICIES

- A. The City will seek to provide access to the most important railroad historic resources by using existing and proposed rights-of-way, trails and bikeways, and by securing access easements to historic features in new public and private development.
- B. The Community Development Director and Architectural Review Commission will evaluate new development projects to preserve views of historic railroad features from adjacent areas, and views of principle landmarks from the railroad right-of-way, including Terrace Hill, the Morros, South Street Hills, Cuesta Ridge, and the Santa Lucia Range. Buildings, landscaping, signs and other site features should be designed to enhance, not obscure, such views.
- C. The City will work with property owners and community groups to increase public awareness and understanding of our railroad heritage by establishing a historic overlook on Terrace Hill, supporting development of a "Railroad Walk of History", and by installing historic information signage in public projects and encouraging them on private development projects.

Figure 20: Adaptive Reuse Concept

Roundhouse Site



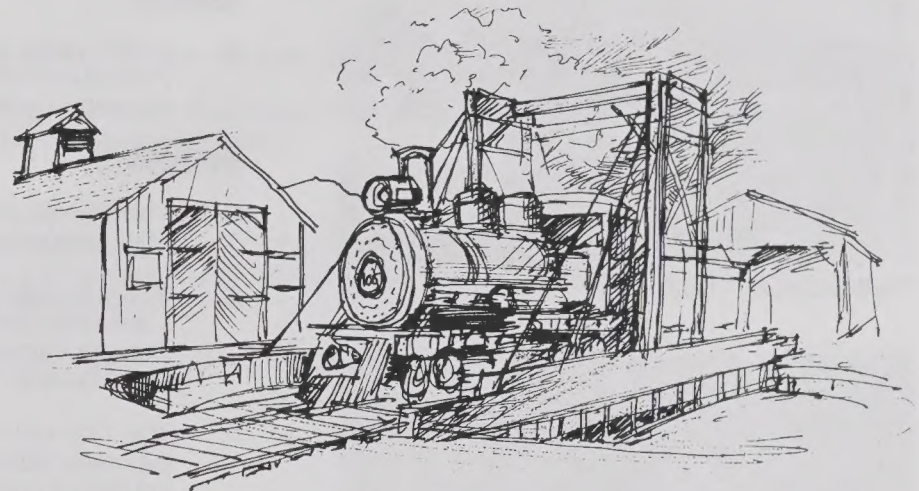
Railroad Express Agency building, 1021 Railroad Avenue

historic preservation policies and programs

2.5 RETAIN THE RAILROAD DISTRICT'S MIXED-USE CHARACTER.

POLICIES

- A. City land use decisions should help preserve the Railroad District's mix of residential, commercial, transportation and industrial uses and allow limited, gradual expansion of tourist-commercial uses such as lodging and specialty retail sales along with industrial/service-commercial uses.
- B. Railroad-related support facilities, such as loading docks, platforms, spur tracks, and utilities should be maintained in appropriate locations.
- C. Uses which detract from the District's historic architectural character, circulation patterns, and neighborhood compatibility will be discouraged.
- D. The City will encourage adaptive reuse of the former Railroad Express Agency building at 1021 Railroad Avenue; and of the historic Southern Pacific Railroad Freight Warehouse at 1940 Santa Barbara Street.



Pacific Coast Railway turntable and locomotive.

2.6 RECOGNIZE THE RAILROAD DISTRICT AS A COMMUNITY GATEWAY.

POLICIES

- A. The City will promote community and property owner cleanup efforts in the District, specifically targeting: abandoned vehicle removal, trash, graffiti, dilapidated fences, and unscreened storage yards.
- B. Public art and historic displays should be incorporated into new development to inform, interpret and inspire a shared community appreciation of our railroad heritage, consistent with the City's Public Art Program.

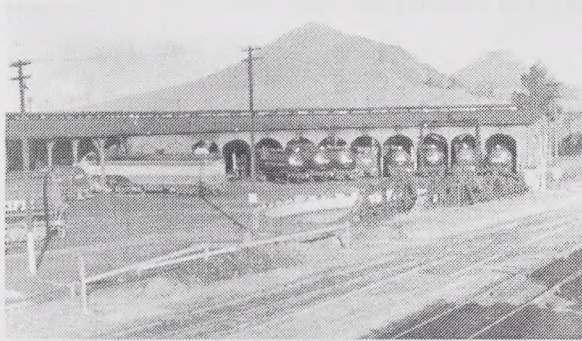
PROGRAMS

- C. The City will consider financial and other incentives to encourage and reward property owner efforts to clean up and beautify their properties. Incentives may include: establishing a rehabilitation loan fund; allocating grant funds for "spot blight" cleanup and improvements; waiver of development review or permit fees; and special City Council recognition or awards.
- D. The City will designate the railroad corridor within the city limits as a scenic route, and prohibit billboards and amortize existing billboards to secure their eventual removal as allowed by law.



Southern Pacific signal repair shop.

historic preservation policies and programs



The Roundhouse in 1952.



The original depot in 1922.

2.7 IMPROVE RAILROAD DISTRICT STREETS AND PUBLIC FACILITIES.

POLICY

- A. Public open space and parkland linkages shall be encouraged by establishing safe pedestrian and bicycle routes linking the railroad corridor with residential neighborhoods, existing or potential open spaces and parks, and with Cal Poly University.

PROGRAMS

- B. The City will seek consistency among the Pedestrian Circulation Plan, Bicycle Transportation Plan, Circulation Element and the Railroad District Plan.
- C. In future Capital Improvement Programs, the City will consider the need to install improvements at Emily Street, Roundhouse Avenue, High Street, Church Street, Santa Barbara Street and Osos Street to meet City standards in terms of street paving, curbs, street lighting, boardwalks, historic street signage and street trees.
- D. The City will consider adopting special engineering standards for the Railroad District including lighting standards, street signage, and other public area improvements which contribute positively to the District's historic character and appearance.
- E. The City will encourage the installation of additional public telephones or emergency call boxes in the District for convenience and safety.

2.8 ENFORCE CITY CONSTRUCTION CODES AND PROPERTY MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

POLICIES

- A. Wherever possible, the City will use education, incentives and recognition to achieve compliance with City construction and zoning codes.
- B. The City will seek improved communication with the railroad to allow smooth rail passenger and freight operations, improve neighborhood compatibility, improve the overall appearance of railroad property, and prevent the loss of important historic resources.

PROGRAM

- C. The City will identify code violations in the Railroad District and notify property owners of the necessary corrective actions.

historic preservation policies and programs

2.9 PROMOTE THE RAILROAD DISTRICT'S ECONOMIC HEALTH.

POLICIES

- A. The City will encourage efforts to provide additional public parking and support facilities for railroad passengers.
- B. The City will promote new businesses in the Railroad District through its business marketing program and will encourage tourism-related organizations to promote the Railroad District as a tourist destination and community gateway.

PROGRAMS

- C. City policies and capital improvement programming will be used to help strengthen the District's economy. Possible economic revitalization tools include street and traffic improvements, grant funding for historic and seismic building rehabilitation, and promotion or sponsorship of special events, such as a "Railroad Days" street fair or other celebrations of railroad history.
- D. The City will consider amending its Zoning Regulations to apply a mixed use zone designation to the Railroad District to allow a broader range of uses in areas now zoned C-S (Service-Commercial).



The original depot (left) was built in 1895. When the new depot was built, the old depot was remodeled and remained in use for railroad offices until 1968. It was demolished in 1971.

land use policies and programs

3.0 Land Use Policies and Programs

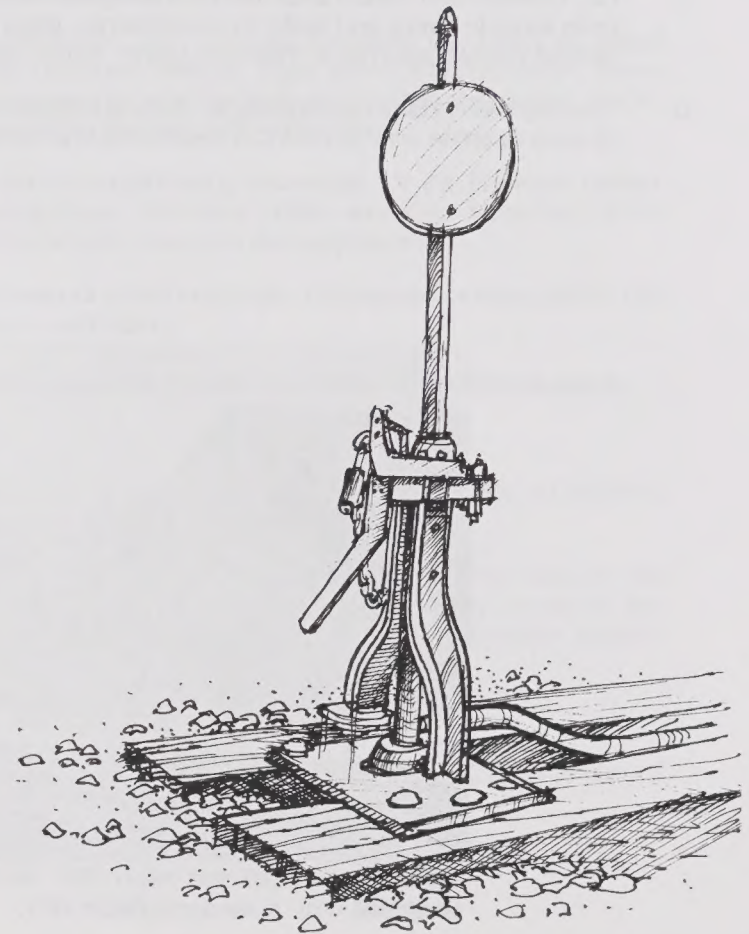
3.1 THE CITY WILL:

POLICIES

- A. Encourage new uses to meet parking requirements through shared, on or off-site parking solutions.
- B. Avoid actions which undermine the mixed-use pattern that has been established in the District. Land use decisions should accommodate limited, gradual addition of tourist oriented uses while allowing the historic commercial, residential, industrial and railroad/transit uses to continue.
- C. Encourage the railroad to maintain, improve, and where appropriate, expand rail facilities within the historic railroad yard boundaries.
- D. Avoid City actions which would hamper freight or passenger rail services.
- E. Ensure that new development, including City-funded projects, reflects the unique architectural character of the Railroad Historic District.
- F. Actively enforce City codes, particularly with regard to public health and safety issues.
- G. Ensure that new development abutting the railroad right-of-way presents an attractive "face" to the railroad, and encourage businesses to orient walkways, waiting and eating areas, and employee use areas toward the railroad.

PROGRAMS

- H. Improve traffic circulation in the District through expanded public transit opportunities, expanded bikeways and trails, and consideration of the possible need to widen Santa Barbara Street.
- I. Establish clear communication with District property owners, particularly the railroad management and operations staff.
- J. Seek to improve passenger loading facilities at the railroad depot parking area.
- K. Consider using Community Development Block Grant funds to offer small business loans and rehabilitation grants in the Railroad District and to restore designated historic railroad features.
- L. Use Railroad District parking lease funds to improve parking enforcement, parking lot appearance and safety.
- M. Work with the railroad to limit noise and emissions from sustained idling of railroad engines, particularly during the hours from 10 PM to 6 AM weekdays.



Track switch stand detail.

- N. Enforce property screening, fencing, and property maintenance standards for properties abutting the railroad right-of-way.
- O. Evaluate the feasibility of establishing an assessment district or similar mechanism to help pay costs of undergrounding utilities and other public improvements in the Railroad District.

3.2 Property Owners Should:

POLICIES

- A. Maintain buildings and grounds by regular building painting and repair, and by removing junk, weeds, graffiti, old cars, or other similar materials.
- B. Establish uses which can take advantage of transportation, tourist or service facilities available in or near the District.
- C. Preserve the scale, pattern and spacing of the existing buildings along the west side of Santa Barbara Street.
- D. Take advantage of shared or offsite parking to avoid inefficient and unsightly parking in street yards.
- E. Provide pedestrian and bicycle access "spurs" to link adjacent commercial uses and dwellings with the railroad corridor.

3.3 The Railroad (Union Pacific and Amtrak) Should:

POLICIES

- A. Retain and improve freight and passenger service.
- B. Limit the times and duration of idling engines next to noise-sensitive residential areas, particularly during the hours from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.
- C. Provide shielding on all yard and Amtrak maintenance site lighting to prevent off-site glare.
- D. Maintain, and where feasible, improve and adapt historic railroad structures to meet changing needs.
- E. Maintain loading ramp and spur track for local freight shipping and delivery.
- F. Maintain the former Railroad Express Agency building at 1021 Railroad Avenue.



The historic Southern Pacific Milling Warehouse is located on private property and in 1998 served as a storage barn for the Pacific Home Improvement Center.



Structures in the railroad right-of-way such as this communications facility should be visually screened with landscaping and maintained in good condition.

4.0 Recommended Traffic Improvements

4.1 OSOS/SANTA BARBARA STREET CORRIDOR

A. Install pedestrian crosswalks at Leff and, Upham streets.

- Traffic volume makes it difficult for pedestrians to cross at these intersections during peak traffic hours. Pedestrian improvements could include: the use of paving which provides both visual and safety benefits, such as contrasting colors and textures in-lieu of standard crosswalk striping; in-pavement lighting; pedestrian-actuated traffic signals; and improved signage and street lighting. A pedestrian-actuated signal may not be necessary if traffic signals are installed at Upham/Santa Barbara or High/Santa Barbara Streets.

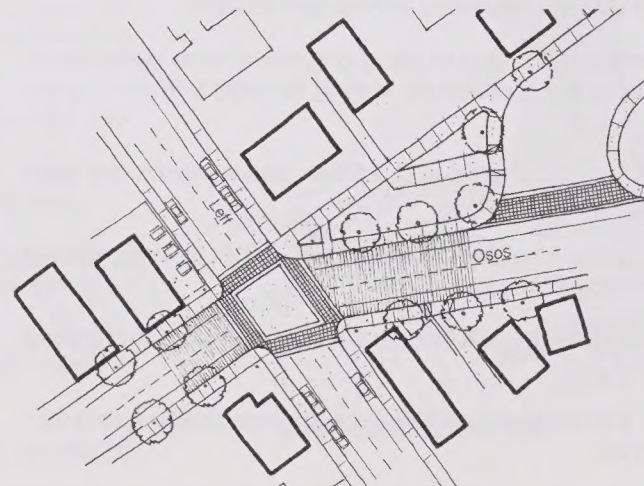
B. Install traffic signals at Upham Street.

- Conceptual plans for the multi-modal transit transfer center show its main entrance located at the intersection of Upham, Morro and Santa Barbara Street. Traffic signals at this location and at the intersection of Santa Barbara and High Streets may, in the future, be warranted to allow cars, buses, bicyclists and pedestrians to enter the site from Santa Barbara Street. In addition, the "platooning effect" resulting from signalization could help side street turns onto Osos and Santa Barbara Street. Signals and related facilities should be designed to be sensitive to the District's historic architectural character while complying with the City's adopted public safety standards. Signals will be installed only when traffic studies show they are warranted.

Figure 21: Design Concept - Osos/Leff Street Crossing



Figure 22: Plan view - Osos/Leff Street Crossing Design Concept



recommended transportation and circulation improvements

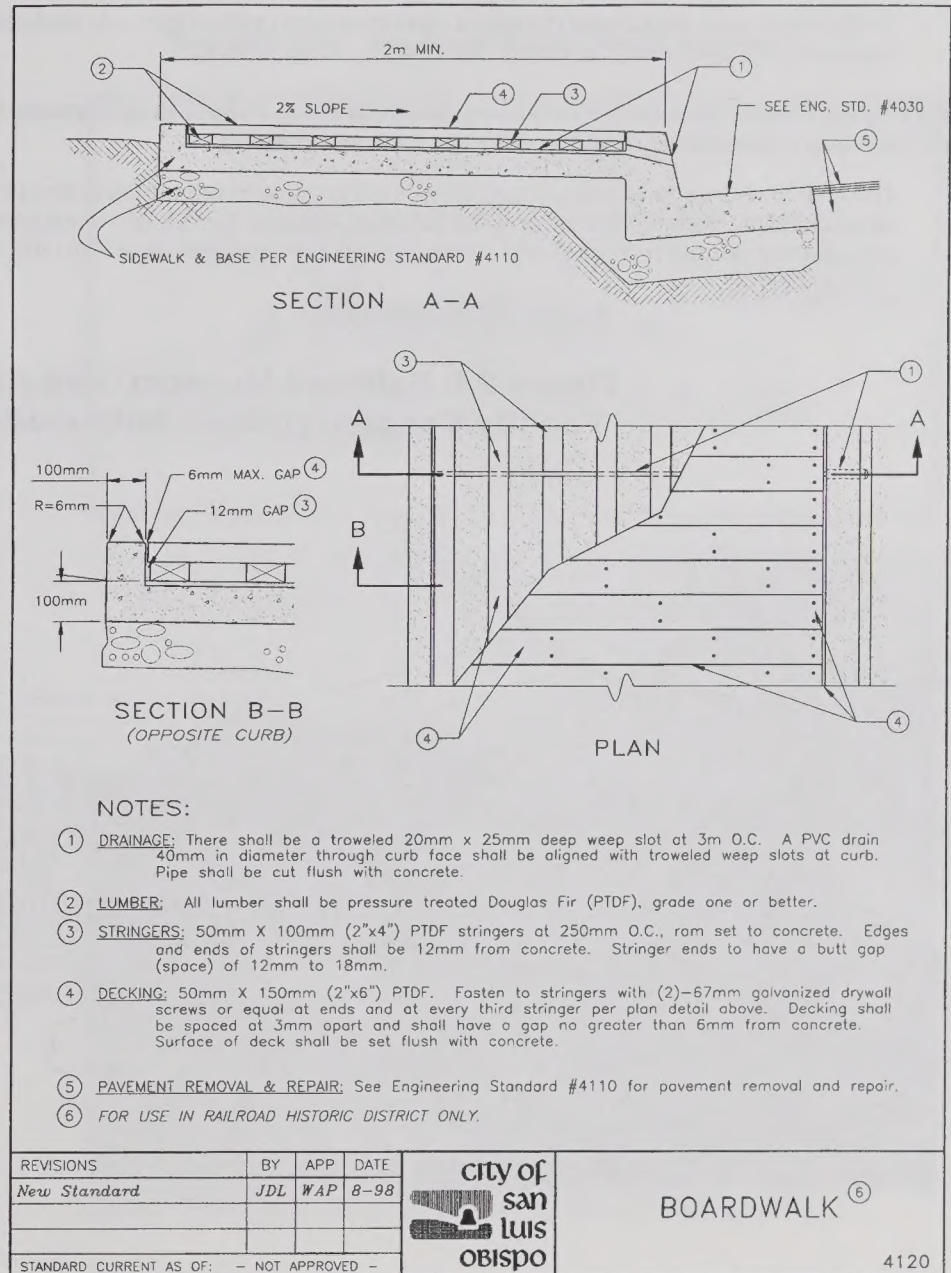
C. Widen Santa Barbara Street from Broad to Upham Streets to accommodate left turn pockets.

- Santa Barbara Street is a 60-foot wide right-of-way and currently accommodates two 10-foot parkways, two 11-foot travel lanes, two 5-foot bicycle lanes and 8 feet of curbside parking along the west side of the street. Motorists turning left into the Pacific Home Improvement Center and other businesses along Santa Barbara Street increase congestion and pose safety hazards by blocking through traffic. A six- to eight-foot widening of the street right-of-way along the east side of Santa Barbara Street would allow left-turn pockets and bus turnouts to improve traffic flow and reduce "bottlenecks."

D. Install curb, gutter, boardwalk, and street trees along the east side of Santa Barbara Street; High and Roundhouse streets east of Santa Barbara Street; and along Emily Street between the railroad right-of-way and the South Street right-of-way

- Sidewalk, curb and gutter are in poor condition and in some areas, do not exist. Frontage improvements are needed along the east side of Santa Barbara Street, south of Upham Street and on side streets near the railroad yard. A wood boardwalk should be installed, per City standards, along Railroad Avenue, Osos Street, Santa Barbara Street, High Street, Roundhouse Avenue and Emily Street to match the railroad-theme boardwalk already installed on Osos and Santa Barbara Streets. On High and Roundhouse Streets, installation of boardwalk may be postponed if concrete paving is determined necessary to meet safety and functional needs of new or expanded industrial uses.

Figure 23: Boardwalk Detail



RECOMMENDED TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS

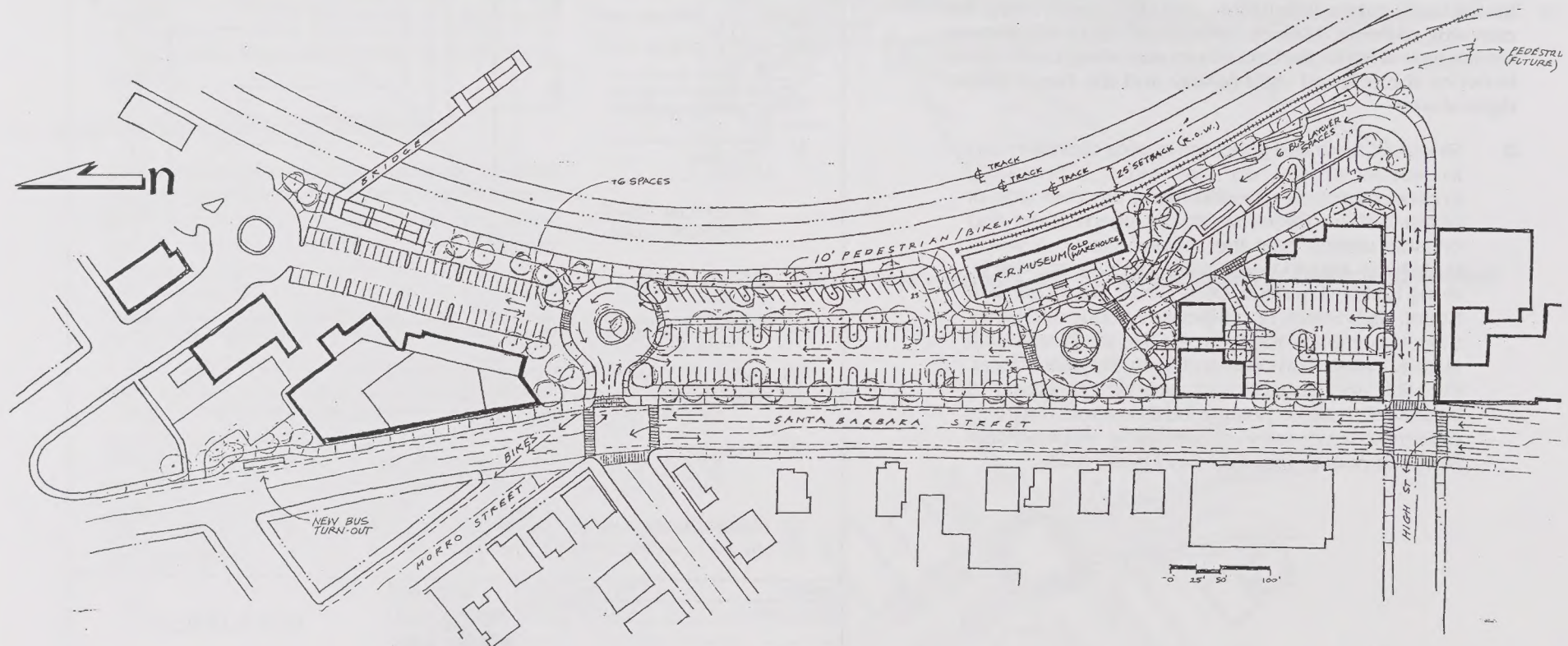
E. Install traffic signage and street lighting.

- Traffic signs may be needed to direct motorists and pedestrians. At pedestrian crossings, additional street lighting would help improve sight distance.

F. The City and other responsible agencies should develop a multi-modal transit transfer center along the railroad corridor to handle local, regional and tour bus connections, and to provide additional parking.

- The City and County and State agencies have proposed the construction of a new parking lot and bus facility adjacent to the Railroad Square office building, within what is now railroad right-of-way. The facility would allow bus transfers and convenient connections between public and private transportation modes and meet parking demand resulting from the San Diegan passenger train service.

Figure 24: Railroad Museum and Amtrack Passenger Parking Facility Concept (future multi-modal transit transfer center)



RECOMMENDED TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS

4.2 RAILROAD CORRIDOR

A. Install additional bicycle/pedestrian railroad crossings at Penny Lane-Fairview Street, and near the end of east end of Lawrence Drive opposite Sinsheimer Park.

- Pedestrians and bicyclists may cross the railroad tracks safely at the Jennifer Street Bridge. Additional crossings are needed in Areas 1 and 3 to facilitate inter-neighborhood connections and a convenient alternate to the Johnson Avenue Underpass for bicyclists; and safe access to Sinsheimer Park for residents of the Villa Rosa, Stoneridge I and II, and Lawrence Drive/Meadow Street neighborhoods. Three railroad crossings have been identified in previous City reports or plans: the Bishop Street Extension (Circulation Element), at Sinsheimer Park (Parks and Recreation Master Plan) and at the Jennifer Street Bridge.

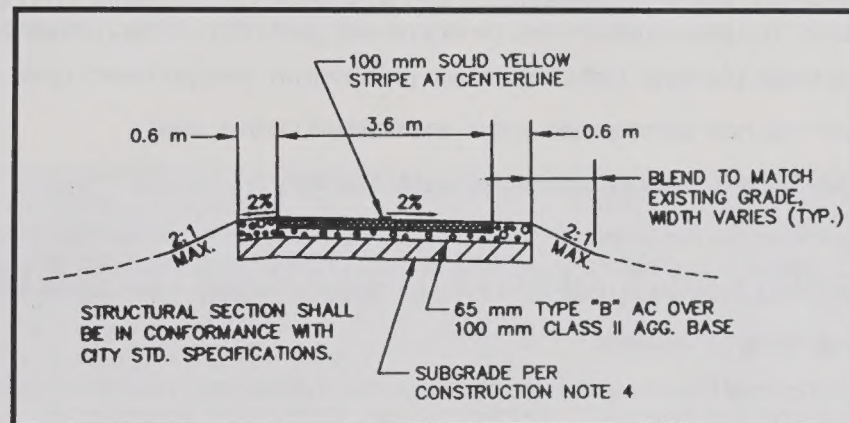
B. Provide additional passenger loading areas near the Railroad Depot.

- The Santa Rosa Street off-ramp on Highway 101 is the designated exit for the Amtrak station. No convenient passenger loading exists for motorists entering Railroad Avenue from Santa Rosa; consequently, motorists stopping to unload passengers block traffic and create hazardous conditions. There is sufficient City-owned right-of-way to provide a new passenger loading area across Railroad Avenue from the station entrance.

C. Construct a bikeway from the Jennifer Street Bridge to Johnson Avenue, with connections to Johnson Avenue, Ella and Lizzie streets.

- The adopted Bike Plan indicates that a continuous bikeway from Orcutt Road to the Jennifer Street Bridge should be provided along both sides of the railroad tracks. The Plan recommends that the bikeway be extended to Fairview Street along the east side of the tracks to connect to the proposed Penny Lane bridge and the Ella/Johnson/Flora Drive neighborhoods.

Figure 25: Typical Bike Path Section



Bikeway entrance off of Orcutt Road at the south end of the Railroad District.

Implementation

5.0 Implementation

The Railroad District Plan contains policies and a “menu” of physical improvements to be undertaken as new public and private development projects are built in the District. As an adopted “Area plan”, the Railroad District Plan implements the General Plan and will be implemented by the City’s various departments, in cooperation with District property owners and the community. The plan’s policies and programs will guide City decision-making in the following key areas:

- 1) Long-range planning, including historic preservation, transportation, open space and land use issues;
- 2) Reviewing new development within the Railroad District; and
- 3) Capital improvement programming and budgeting.

Features shown on the Railroad District Plan are schematic and subject to change based on further design and engineering studies. Policies and programs shall be followed unless the City Council determines that the Public’s interest, and the intent of the Railroad District Plan policies, would be better served by following another course of action.

5.1 Long-Range Planning

The City’s General Plan establishes a broad, comprehensive planning framework for the entire city. The Railroad District Plan will help implement policies in the General Plan dealing with land use, transportation, community services, public safety, historic preservation, community identity and aesthetics, and open space, and recreation. For example, General Plan Land Use Element Policy LU 8.4 requires the City to prepare an area plan for the Santa Barbara Street Area, containing design guidelines and implementation programs. This Railroad District Plan meets the “area plan” requirement in the Railroad District.

5.2 Development Review

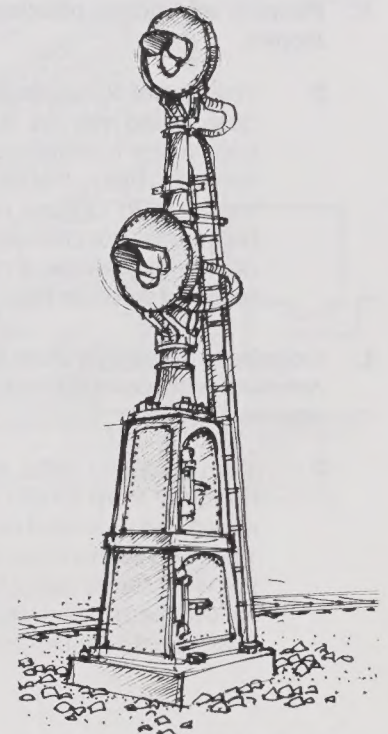
The City reviews new developments or land use changes for consistency with adopted policies, programs and standards. Planning applications for environmental review, architectural review, use permits or other development entitlements are submitted to the Community Development Department. The Railroad District Plan will be used by City staff, the City Council, and its advisory bodies, such as the Planning Commission, Architectural Review Commission, and Cultural Heritage Committee, to evaluate planning applications and Public Works projects, including traffic controls, street lighting and street furniture within the Railroad District. Development projects should be consistent with the policies and programs in this plan. The City’s Architectural Guidelines, adopted by ordinance (SLOMC 2.48), are to be supplemented by the Railroad District Architectural Guidelines.

5.3 Capital Improvement Programming and Budget

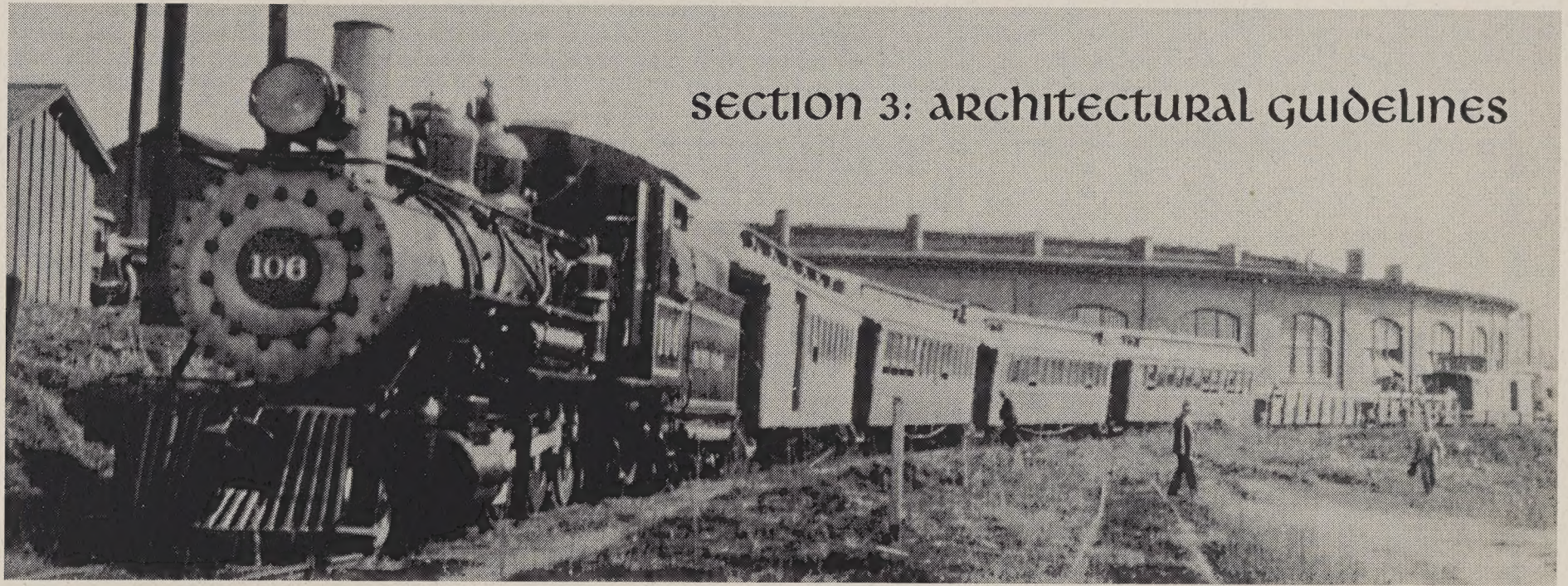
The City owns and operates several public facilities in the Railroad District. Bikeways, parking and transit facilities are operated for the public’s benefit. This plan identifies existing public facilities and possible future improvements. The Railroad District Plan will be used as a resource document and referred to in the preparation of the City’s budget and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Budgets spell out how City funds are obtained and spent, and the CIP lists public improvements, facilities and equipment which the City plans to construct or install. The Planning Commission reviews the CIP for conformity with the General Plan. The City Council approves the City budget.

5.4 Amending The Plan

Plan amendments can be initiated either by citizens, the Planning Commission or the City Council at any time. Such changes will be considered by the Planning Commission and City Council. This Plan may be amended as often as needed subject to the same procedures set forth by the City Council for amending specific plans.



Target signal to control train traffic.

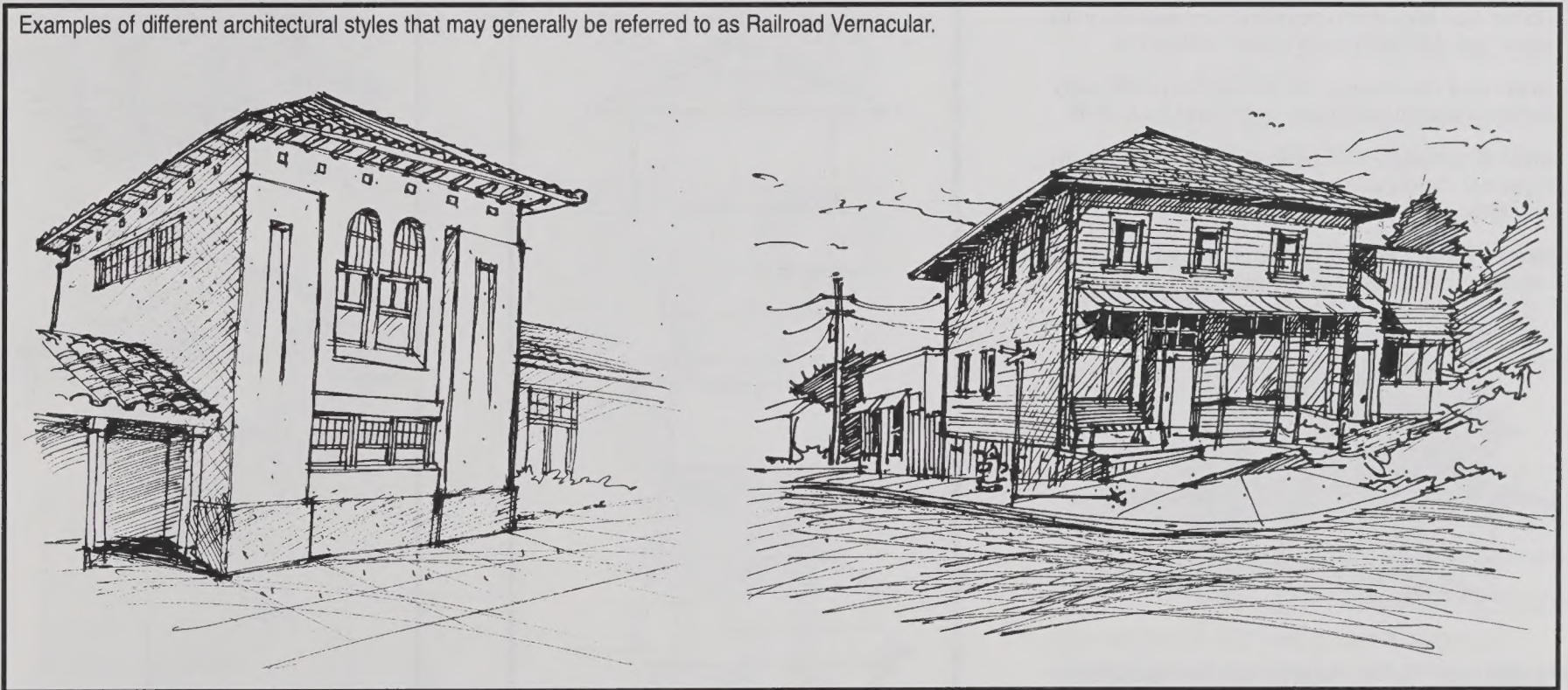


Architectural Guidelines for the Railroad District

San Luis Obispo has adopted citywide architectural guidelines which apply to new buildings, significant remodels, site improvements, and public area improvements. The Railroad District Architectural Guidelines are to supplement the citywide architectural guidelines and are to be applied in a similar manner, except that they apply only to the Railroad District as shown in Figure 4. Within this area, new development, remodels and additions, site improvements, and publicly-funded projects should follow these guidelines. Property owners, developers, designers, City staff and advisory bodies, such as the Cultural Heritage Committee, Architectural Review Commission and the Planning Commission will use these guidelines to review development projects, consistent with Municipal Code Chapter 2.48.

Many of the older buildings in the Railroad District are generally described as "Railroad Vernacular" buildings. A variety of architectural styles fall under this category. Some of the more common architectural elements exemplifying this architectural style are illustrated in this document. These examples provide a "menu" of architectural elements which can be incorporated into new development projects in the Railroad District. *New buildings need not include all of these elements, nor be designed to be a replica of a historic building.* The Cultural Heritage Committee and Architectural Review Commission interpret the guidelines and will consider contemporary architectural styles which are consistent with these guidelines and which complement the District's historic character.

Examples of different architectural styles that may generally be referred to as Railroad Vernacular.



architectural guidelines

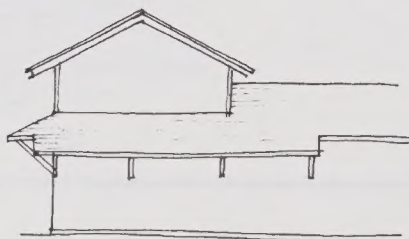
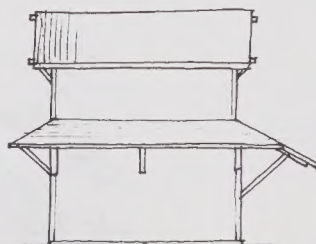
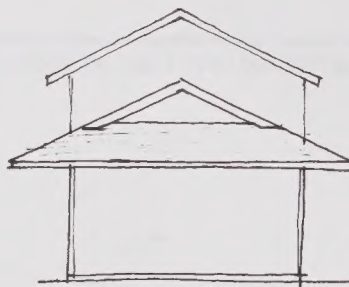
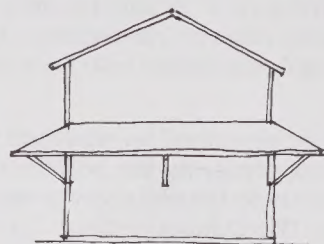
Building Form, Massing, and Roof Lines

1. Simple, rectilinear building forms should predominate.
2. Lower building level (ground floor) massing should be horizontal with equal or lesser volume on upper levels.
3. Use medium-sloping roofs, generally 4:12 - 8:12 pitch.
4. False-front buildings with shed roofs and parapets may be used.
5. Gable, hip, and shed roof forms are typical, with some combinations and minor variations.
6. Deep roof overhangs are common, particularly for commercial buildings, at ground floor level.
7. Roof overhangs are typically supported with exposed, diagonal support braces or decorative brackets.
8. Simple gable, hipped, or Dutch hipped dormers can be used for light or ventilation.

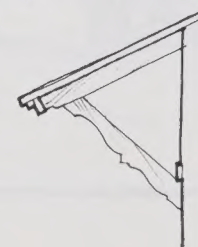
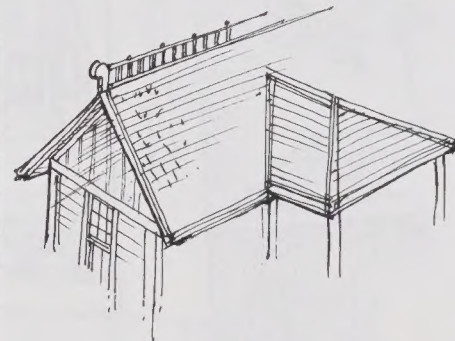
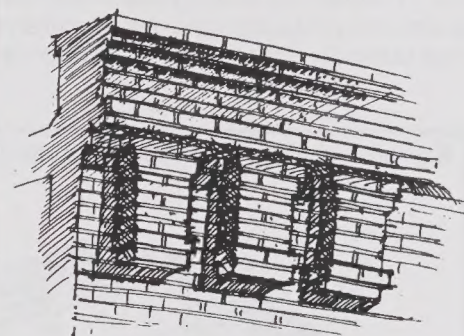


Shed roofed buildings help increase light and ventilation in industrial buildings and contribute to the character of the District.

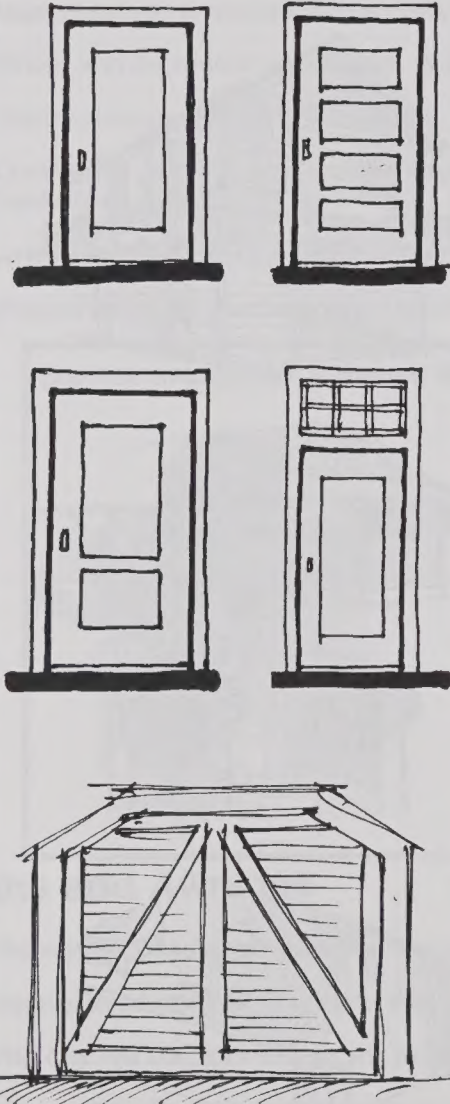
Simple, rectilinear building forms.



Roof lines and details.



Single and multi-panel doors emphasizing symmetry.

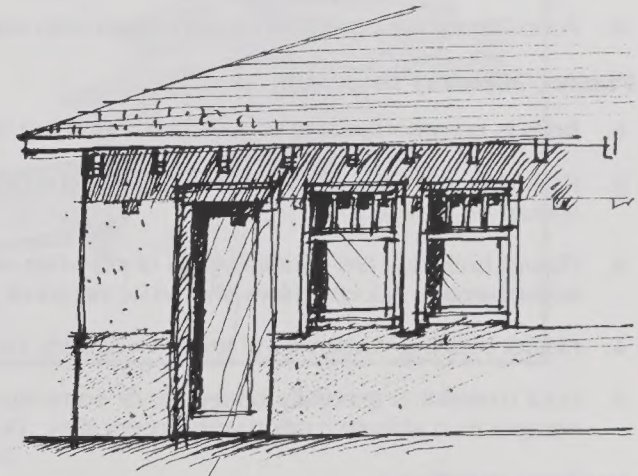


Various windows, single and grouped, with divided lites.



Doors and Windows

1. Doors and windows should emphasize symmetry and be vertically oriented.
2. Doors should typically be single or multi-panel, occasionally with glazing and transom windows above doors.
3. Windows are typically fixed, or double hung, often with divided lites.
4. Windows are often grouped in multiples of two or three, side by side.
5. Horizontal windows may be used with divided lites and may be grouped.
6. Doors and windows should generally have wood or plaster trim.
7. Windows in plaster buildings may be arched and recessed, sometimes with wood trim.



This rendering shows many of the elements which contribute to the Railroad Vernacular style, including eaves with exposed rafters, a single panel door, and recessed windows with divided lites.

architectural guidelines

Surface Treatment and Colors

Wood Buildings

1. Horizontal and vertical shiplap, "V-rustic" siding, or board and batten siding are common.
2. Shingles are often used as infill siding for gable ends or above doors and windows, away from people contact areas.
3. Wood trim is commonly used to create decorative patterns.
4. Siding may change direction in the same plane to provide variety in surface pattern and texture.
5. Horizontal trim may be used to separate board patterns or to create a wainscot effect.
6. Emphasize lighter earthtones such as tan and ochre, with contrasting trim and roof colors. Accent colors are generally low chroma and relatively neutral colors.
7. Common roof materials include composition shingle, rolled asphalt roofing, built-up roofing, low profile corrugated metal, and barrel tile. Barrel tile is occasionally used to accent ridges on composition shingle roofs.
8. If chimneys are used, they are generally of brick with simple ornamentation at the cap.
9. Foundations are commonly emphasized with brick, stone, or plaster wainscot.

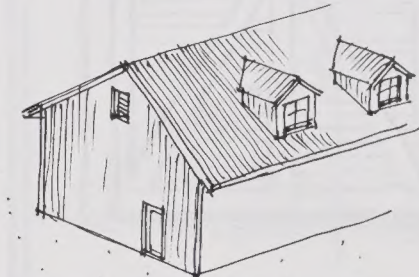
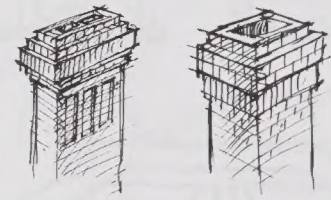
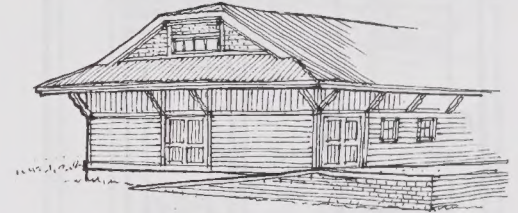
Plaster/Masonry Buildings

1. Brick is commonly used as an exterior building material.
2. Plaster should have a smooth, hand-finished appearance. Stucco or heavily-troweled finishes should be avoided.
3. Plaster buildings are usually white or off-white with accent plaster colors at wainscot or in accent areas. Accent colors should be pastel or low chroma.
4. Plaster building wainscots at lower walls may be flush and painted simply, or dimensional.
5. Roof material is generally barrel tile, or sometimes "diamond pattern" or similar decorative composition shingle roofing with accent tiles. Built-up roofing is also common.

Auxiliary Buildings

1. Auxiliary buildings may be sided with the same material as adjacent principle buildings on the same lot; or if solitary, wood or unpainted corrugated metal panel siding is common.
2. Roofs should generally consist of composition shingles or corrugated metal panels.

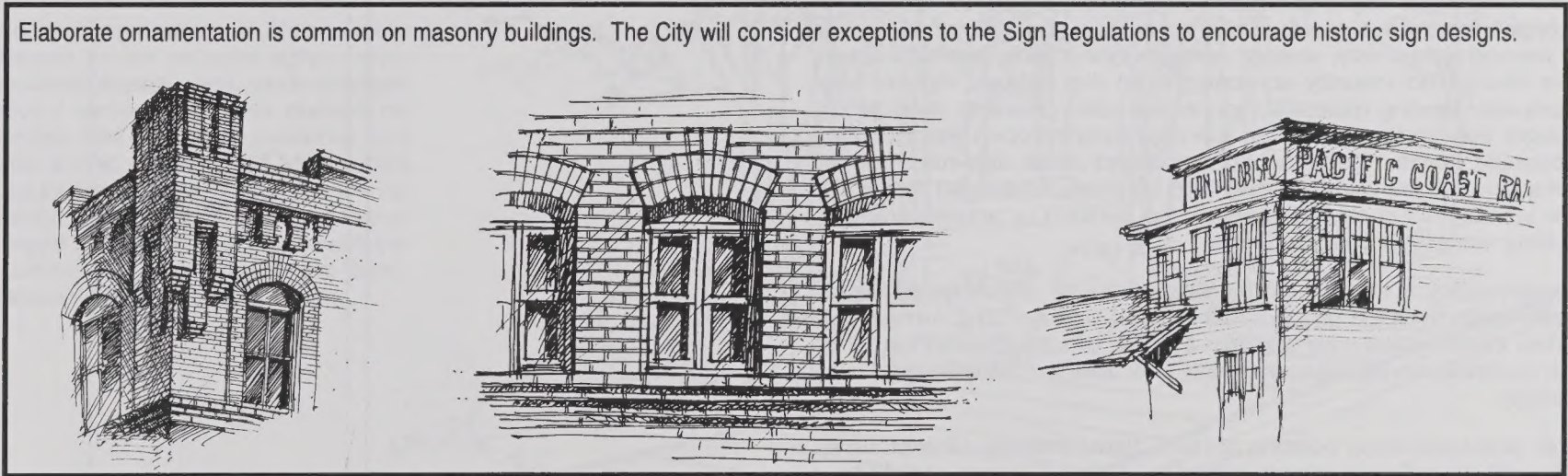
Wood or corrugated metal panel siding, or plaster are common surfaces. Stucco should be avoided.



Architectural Details

1. Commercial buildings generally have simple detailing with little decoration or ornamentation.
2. Some carved shapes are used for rafter tiles, brackets, roof eave bracing, and roof gutters.
3. More elaborate ornamentation is common on masonry buildings, including parapet details, towers or decorative cornices or quoins.
4. Finials and decorative wood work is sometimes used at roof ridges.
5. Plaster corners are typically rounded.
6. Connection details, particularly for large structures, are visually emphasized, sometimes with timber connectors, bolts, brackets or other similar hardware.
7. Linear raised decks or platforms common with structures with raised floors.
8. Exterior-mounted mechanical equipment, including HVAC units, fire suppression equipment, and antennas should be architecturally screened.

Elaborate ornamentation is common on masonry buildings. The City will consider exceptions to the Sign Regulations to encourage historic sign designs.



Signs and Awnings

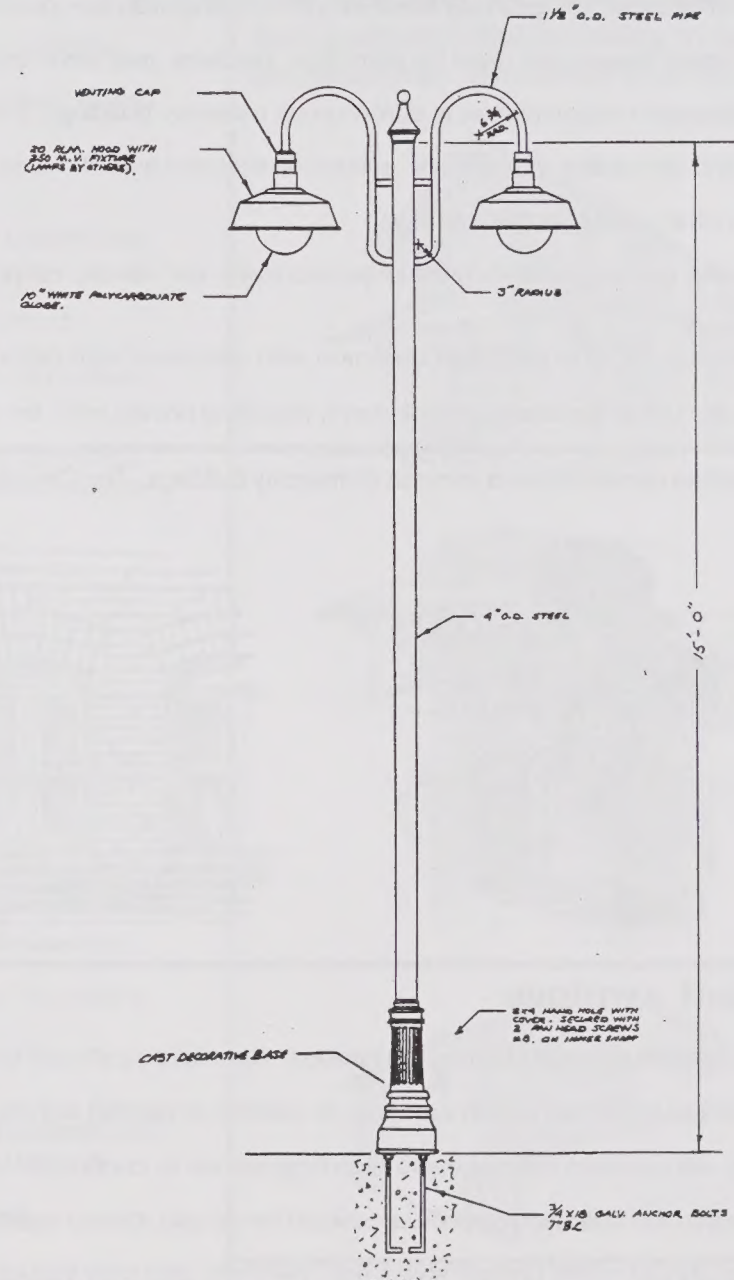
1. Signage should generally be non-illuminated. Spot lighting should be used where lighting is needed.
2. Signs should either be monument type, or painted or applied individual letters directly on building walls.
3. The City will consider exceptions to Sign Regulations to encourage historic sign designs and placement.
4. Signs within the Railroad right-of-way should be simple, clearly legible, and reflect historical railroad graphic standards and colors.
5. Awnings should reflect historic styles and materials, and may include painted signs. Backlit or glossy awnings should be avoided.

architectural guidelines

Site and Public Area Improvements

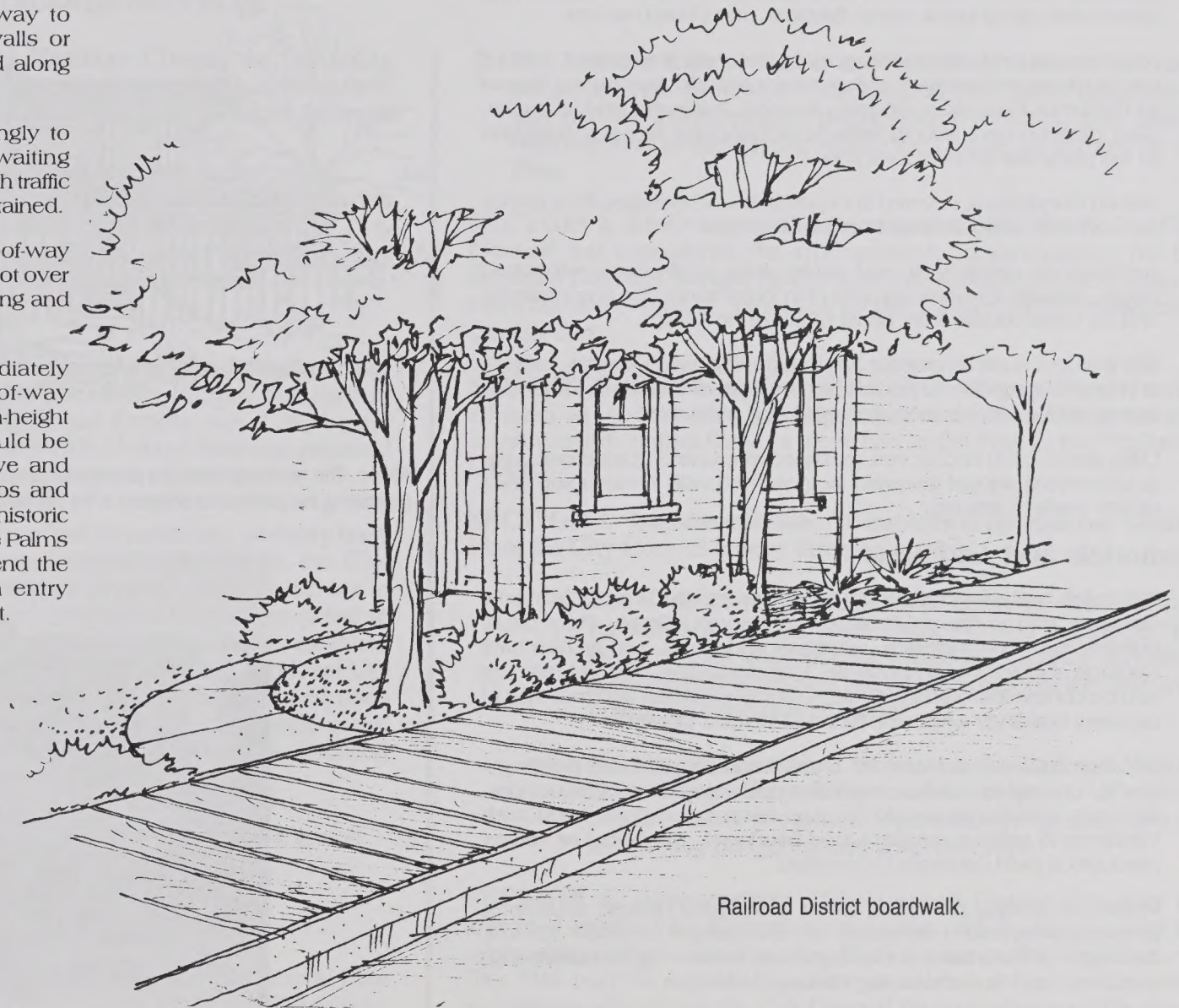
1. Site improvements, such as seating areas, bollards, stairs, ramps and walkways should be designed to complement the railroad architectural character. Public improvements such as, but not limited to, traffic controls, street lights, signs, benches and trash containers should be designed in a historic character similar to styles prevalent in the Railroad District before 1950, and they shall be approved by the Architectural Review Commission before the final design is completed.
2. Lighting in the depot area should closely resemble the design of the railroad era downlights used in the passenger platform area. All lighting should be shielded to prevent glare onto adjacent properties.
3. Pole lights, bollards, information signs, trees and other vertical landscape features should be used to create repetitive, linear, rhythmic elements along the railroad corridor to complement the District's historic character.
4. In the passenger depot and other high traffic areas, an open-style, decorative fencing and/or rails should be used. In non-traffic areas abutting the railroad right-of-way, storage areas, construction yards and similar uses should be visually screened from the railroad right-of-way. Appropriate fencing materials include vinyl-clad chainlink, steel picket, wrought iron and other similar, low-maintenance open fences which discourage graffiti. Combination wood and metal rails may also be appropriate. Solid, plain masonry and concrete, walls; and residential-style wood fencing should generally be avoided or accompanied by climbing vines to discourage graffiti.
5. Security fencing, such as barbed or concertina wire, should be minimized where visible from the railroad yard or a public way. The Architectural Review Commission may approve the use of security fencing when such materials are visually compatible with their surroundings and used sparingly.
6. Public sidewalks along portions of Osos, Santa Barbara, Church, Emily, High, and Roundhouse streets within the Railroad District should be a City-approved wood boardwalk design.
7. Decorative paving using patterns or integral color is encouraged in specific areas to define or clarify circulation or activity areas.
8. Pedestrian bridges, underpasses and other transportation- or rail-related structures should use historic materials and design elements. Possible elements include: metal and heavy timber structural supports with exposed connectors; local stone or brick foundations or bases; and use of spur track, railroad ties or other railroad equipment and materials.

Figure 26: Railroad District pedestrian lighting, typical



Landscape Design

1. Planting areas should be provided: 1) in or adjacent to outdoor public use areas; 2) along the railroad right-of-way to screen storage yards, solid walls or fences, or unsightly views; and along public street parkways.
2. Planting should be used sparingly to define pedestrian use areas, waiting areas, and other high visibility/high traffic areas that can be regularly maintained.
3. Planting within the railroad right-of-way should be low-profile, generally not over 12-15 feet tall, to provide screening and color.
4. Tree planting within or immediately adjacent to the railroad right-of-way should emphasize open, medium-height canopy trees; and trees should be selected and placed to preserve and frame scenic vistas of the Morros and surrounding hillsides. Within the historic Railroad Yard, Canary Island Date Palms or equal should be used to extend the Southern Pacific theme as an entry statement for the Railroad District.



Railroad District boardwalk.

architectural guidelines

Residential Buildings

1. New residential buildings should generally maintain the prevailing spacing, scale, setbacks and character of older houses and apartments along Osos, Santa Barbara, and Church streets.
2. New houses and apartments should generally reflect the District's predominant architectural styles, which include, but are not limited to California Bungalow, Spanish Revival, Italianate, and Victorian. New development should include architectural features common to the particular architectural style.
3. Raised foundations, covered front porches, and recessed front entries are common residential architectural features.
4. Architectural detailing at roof gable ends, roof eaves, windows, doors, railings, foundations, and chimneys should be emphasized, and be used consistently on all building elevations.
5. Site features such as exterior lighting, paving, walls, fences, railings and landscaping should be selected for ease of maintenance and for compatibility with traditional designs and materials.
6. Utility areas, trash enclosures, and uncovered parking spaces (except in driveways) should generally be screened with landscaping and/or low walls or fencing.

Remodels and Additions

1. Remodels and additions should be sensitive to the building's original character and to the character of adjacent buildings. Roof pitch, building form and materials, windows and doors, and architectural detailing should, where possible, match existing building features and be compatible with the scale, spacing, setbacks and massing of adjacent buildings within the Railroad Historic District.
2. Building colors and materials should complement the building's historic character. When remodeling designated historic structures, materials and details should be used honestly such as wood sash windows to replace existing wood windows. Simulated or veneer products should generally be avoided.
3. When remodeling or adding on to designated historic structures, property owners and designers are encouraged to follow the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings.

Figure 27: Residential Remodel and Addition



Above: This rendering shows the potential for remodelling and expanding residential structures while maintaining the architectural character of the Railroad District. Below: A photograph of the structure.



resolution adopting the railroad district plan

FIGURE 28: RESOLUTION NO. 8817 (1998 Series)

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO APPROVING THE RAILROAD DISTRICT PLAN

WHEREAS, the Cultural Heritage Committee, Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Architectural Review Commission have held public hearings on the Draft Railroad District Plan; and

WHEREAS, after reviewing the Draft Plan and considering public testimony, these advisory bodies recommended that the City Council approve the Railroad District Plan, including policies and programs regarding historic preservation, transportation and circulation, land use, and aesthetics; and

WHEREAS, the Director of Community Development has issued a negative declaration of environmental impact, pursuant to provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and based on an initial environmental study (ER 31-98) which was prepared and circulated for the required public review period; and

WHEREAS, in consideration of public testimony, advisory body recommendations, staff analysis, and its own deliberations, the City Council has determined that the Railroad District Plan is necessary to implement General Plan policies and programs designed to preserve historic resources, encourage alternative transportation modes, establish architectural guidelines and improvements for designated "Optional Use and Special Design Areas", improve public access to parks and open space, improve the safety and appearance of streets and public areas, and enhance the economic vitality of the City's mixed-use Railroad District.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of San Luis Obispo as follows:

SECTION 1. Findings.

1. The Railroad District Plan is in conformance with the General Plan and with the City's Historic Preservation Program Guidelines intended to preserve historic resources and areas.

2. The Railroad District Plan is an "Area Plan", intended to carry out policies and programs of the General Plan and to guide public and private development, public improvements, and capital improvement programming within the District as defined by the Plan.

SECTION 2. Environmental Determination (ER 31-98). The City Council has considered the environmental determination for the Railroad District Plan and hereby approves a negative declaration of environmental impact, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

SECTION 3. Plan Adoption. The Railroad District Plan is hereby adopted as an area plan guiding public and private land use and improvements within the area identified in the Plan as the "Railroad District."

SECTION 4. Implementation. To implement the Railroad District Plan, the City Council hereby directs that:

- A. The Community Development Director shall initiate rezoning of the Railroad District to add a historic "H" overlay zone to properties within the District, including architectural guidelines intended to preserve the District's unique architectural character.
- B. City Departments shall implement the Railroad District Plan through their design and development of capital improvement programs, operating programs, and in developing budgeting and grant requests.

SECTION 5. Amendments. The Railroad District Plan may be amended by the City Council at any time. Such changes may be initiated by citizens, the Planning Commission or the City Council. The Plan may be amended as often as needed, subject to the same procedures set forth by the City Council for amending specific plans.

resolution adopting the railroad district plan

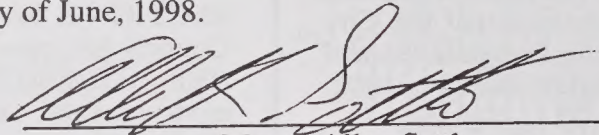
Upon motion of Williams, seconded by Roalman, and on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Council Members Williams, Roalman, Romero, and Mayor Settle

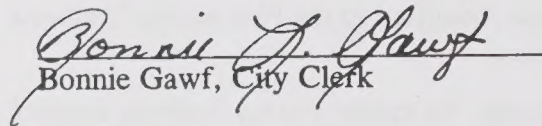
NOES: None

ABSENT: Council Member Smith

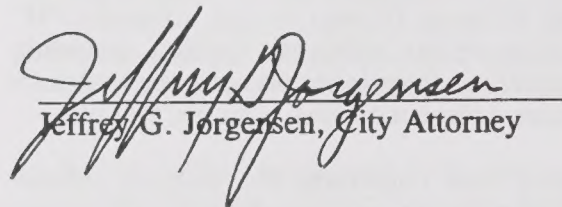
The foregoing resolution was adopted this 16th day of June, 1998.


Mayor Allen Settle

ATTEST:


Bonnie Gawf, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Jeffrey G. Jorgensen, City Attorney

U.C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES



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